



Class BV 4915

Book M 3



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CONVERSION:

A Series of Sermons,

By

B. F. MANIRE.

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DEDICATION.

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY GOOD LITTLE MOTHER,
WHO DEVOTED 18 YEARS OF HER BRIEF LIFE
TO THE TRAINING AND WELFARE
OF ME, HER ONLY CHILD;
TO WHOSE PURE EXAMPLE, FAITHFUL TEACHING,
AND STRICT, YET LOVING DISCIPLINE,
I AM MORE INDEBTED,
THAN TO ALL OTHER HUMAN INFLUENCES,
FOR WHAT I AM, AND WHAT I HAVE DONE,
THIS BOOK OF SERMONS
IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY AND GRATEFULLY DEDICATED
BY HER SON,
48 YEARS AFTER HER DECEASE.

Preface.

This is a publication in book form of sermons that have been published before in periodical form. The twelve sermons on Conversion were published more than twenty years ago in the *Southern Christian Weekly* of Alabama, of which the gifted and lamented J. M. Pickens was the editor and proprietor.

In 1881, they were rewritten for the *Apostolic Church*, a monthly magazine which was published by W. L. Butler of Mayfield, Ky. They were followed in that periodical by three parts of the sermon on Baptism.

In 1890 and '91, these were all revised again, and published in the *Church Register* of Plattsburg, Mo., of which James C. Creel was and is the editor and proprietor.

The fourth argument in the sermon, or treatise rather, on Baptism, with the conclusion of the same, has been written for the first time for publication in this book.

The sermon on "*What must I do to be saved?*" was written first in 1856 when I was in the fourth year of my ministry, and was published by Dr. John T. Walsh in the *American Christian Preacher* of Kinston, N. C. Some years afterward it was published in the *Gospel Advocate* of Nashville, Tenn., and soon after the war in the *American Christian Review* of Cincinnati, O. It was rewritten for each of these and brought to its present form. In 1871, it was published in the *Christian Unitist* of Jackson, Miss., and a thousand copies were struck off in tract form, all of which were soon sold. In 1890, it was again published in the *Church Register*, and a thousand copies issued in pamphlet form, all of which were sold within a year. It has been the most fruitful of all the sermons I have ever preached, and is included in this volume by the request of many brethren.

The Book as a whole is the result of more than forty years of study and labor. In most of the protracted meet-

ings which I have held within the past thirty years, these Sermons have been preached, at least in substance, and they have been blessed to the conversion of many souls. I also have reason to think that in their publication at various times they have been a help to many inquiring hearts.

As a "renaissance of our distinctive teaching" on the first principles of the gospel of Christ, has been called for by the *Christian Standard*, and heartily seconded by many thoughtful brethren, I deem it a favorable time to throw this book upon the patronage of the brethren. I do not know of any volume of sermons that treats so fully of the first great lesson of the gospel—the way of the sinner's return to God under the mediation of Jesus.

In the preparation of these sermons, both for pulpit use and for publication, I have from the first had in view mainly the wants of the "common people," such as those who heard Jesus so gladly. I have always taken it for granted that if the *common* people could understand me, the *uncommon* people, those who are learned and critical, could also, if they wanted to; and I would much rather help the great number who need help and want help, than the few who can get along without any help.

I hope and pray then that this little book may to some extent meet the want that is beginning to be felt as never before—the want of the gospel of Christ in all its simplicity, purity, and power; that it may lead many souls to Christ; that it may be a help to young preachers; and that it may continue to preach Christ and Him crucified long after the "lispering stammering tongue" that preached these sermons, and the trembling hand that pens these lines have moldered back to dust.

B. F. MANIRE.

JACKSON, MISS.

APRIL 24, 1895.

First Sermon.

CONVERSION IN ITS SCRIPTURAL IMPORT.

“Repent ye therefore and BE CONVERTED, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” Acts III:19

“Declaring the CONVERSION of the Gentiles.” Acts XV:3.

Deeply impressed with the importance of the work on which I now enter, and painfully realizing the responsibility incurred by such an undertaking, I most earnestly invoke the blessing of my Heavenly Father; and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

If I know my own heart, it is my sincere desire to ascertain fully and to set forth clearly “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” on the all-important subject of conversion in all its scriptural bearings.

I most confidently believe that the way of the sinner’s return to God has been made so plain in the Scriptures of divine truth, that the “wayfaring man though a simpleton need not err therein;” and I humbly trust and fervently pray that I may be able by the favor of the Lord so to present this way in all its scriptural plainness and simplicity, that the earnest inquirer may be safely led out of darkness, doubt, and fear, into the light and hope of the gospel. I most earnestly beseech all who hear me to lay aside all prejudice, and to enter with me on this investigation with the determination to receive the teaching of the Holy

Spirit, whatever it may be; and to follow this teaching wherever it may lead.

In the treatment of this subject the following course will be pursued:

I. By a careful investigation of scriptural teaching and a fair induction of scriptural facts, we will endeavor to ascertain what conversion is in its full scriptural import.

II. We will consider the agencies which our Heavenly Father has seen fit to employ in the conversion of sinners, and notice particularly the work assigned to each.

III. We will make an effort to set forth accurately the instrumentality of the truth as the medium through which God's converting power is brought to bear on human hearts and human lives.

IV. We will then carefully study the rule of conversion as laid down in the commission given by the Savior to the apostles to guide them in the work of converting sinners and edifying saints.

V. Finally, we will take up the history of conversions as detailed in "Acts of Apostles," and devoutly study the whole subject anew as it is exemplified in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles under the teaching and direction of the apostles themselves.

For the first, second, third, and fourth of these divisions, one sermon each will be sufficient. To the satisfactory development of the fifth, several sermons will be necessary. With these brief preliminary statements, I proceed to the consideration of the special subject of this sermon: *Conversion in its scriptural import.*

What is conversion itself? In what does it consist? and what does it embrace? The term, conversion, literally means the act of turning from one thing to another, or from one course of conduct to another. It also denotes a change from one form to another, or from one use to an-

other. This general application of the term to a change or turning of any kind will help us to an understanding of its special application to man's religious character and conduct. In order, however, to a full and correct understanding of this matter, an induction of scriptural facts as to the usage of the term seems to be necessary.

TERMS USED, AND HOW RENDERED. The noun, conversion, is found but once in the English New Testament—Acts xv:3—in which instance, it represents a word which is found but this one time in the Greek New Testament. This word, *epistropheen*, is defined by Green as “a turning about.”

The verb, convert, in some of its forms is found nine times in the good old version of King James, commonly called the authorized version because its use was first urged by kingly authority, but which will here be called the common version simply because it is the one commonly used by English speaking people. In one of these instances, Matt. xviii:3, which reads, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” it represents a word that is found eighteen times in the original. In this passage only is this word rendered by the term, converted, in the common version. In all the other seventeen instances, it is rendered literally, turn or turn again. In the Revised Testament this passage is thus rendered: “Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Here we not only have turn as the rendering of the verb, but also the active voice instead of the passive. This is worthy of note, and will come up again in our investigation.

In the other eight occurrences of the term, convert, it represents a word that is found thirty-nine times in the original. That we may understand what the Holy Spirit teaches on the subject of conversion, we must carefully

consider the scriptural usage and import of this word, *epistrepho*. In the common version, it is rendered as follows:

- (1). By *convert*, eight times.
- (2). By *turn*, sixteen times.
- (3). By *turn-about*, four times.
- (4). By *return* or *turn-again*, nine times.
- (5). By *come again*, one time.
- (6) By *go again*, one time.

As we wish to lay a broad and solid foundation for this entire series of sermons, we will cite every passage in which this word occurs, italicising its rendering that the reader may see at a glance what word or phrase is used to represent it in English.

BY CONVERT EIGHT TIMES.

1. Matt. XIII:15—"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should *be converted*, and I should heal them."

2. Mark IV:12—"Lest at any time they should *be converted*, and their sins should be forgiven them."

3. John XII:40—"And *be converted*, and I should heal them."

4. Acts XXVIII:27—"And should *be converted*, and I should heal them."

These four instances are all quotations from the same prophecy of Isaiah.

5. Luke XXII:32—"But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou *art converted*, strengthen thy brethren."

6. Acts II:19—"Repent ye therefore, and *be converted*, that your sins may be blotted out," etc.

7 and 8. James IV:19-20—"Brethren, if any of you

do err from the truth, and one *convert* him; let him know, that he which *converteth* the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

BY TURN SIXTEEN TIMES.

1. Luke 1:16—"And many of the children of Israel shall he *turn* to the Lord."

2. Luke 1:17—"To *turn* the hearts of the fathers to the children.

3. Acts ix:35—"And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and *turned* to the Lord."

4. Acts ix:40—"And Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and *turning* him to the body, said, Tabitha, arise."

5. Acts xi:21—"And a great number believed, and *turned* unto the Lord."

6. Acts xiv:15—"And preach unto you, that ye should *turn* from these vanities unto the living God."

7. Acts xv:19—"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them who from among the Gentiles are *turned* to God."

8. Acts xvi:18—"But Paul being grieved, *turned* and said unto the Spirit."

9. Acts xxvi:18—"To open their eyes, and to *turn* them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

10. Acts xxvi:20—"Shewed unto the Gentiles, that they should repent and *turn* to God."

11. II Cor. ii:18—"Nevertheless, when it shall *turn* to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away."

12. Gal. iv:9—"How *turn* you again to the weak and beggarly elements?"

13. I Thess. i:9—"And how ye *turned* to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

14. II Peter ii:21—"Better for them not to have

known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to *turn* from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

15 and 16. Rev. 1:12—"And I *turned* to see the voice that spake with me. And being *turned*, I saw seven golden candle-sticks."

BY TURN-ABOUT, FOUR TIMES.

1. Matt. ix:22—"But Jesus *turned him about*," etc.
2. Mark v:30—"And Jesus *turned him about* in the press."
3. Mark viii:33—"But when he had *turned about*," etc.
4. John xxi:20—"Then Peter *turning about*, and seeing," etc.

BY RETURN OR TURN AGAIN, NINE TIMES.

1. Matt. x:13—"Let your peace *return again* unto you"
2. Matt. xii:44—"Then he saith, I will *return* into my house from whence I came out."
3. Matt. xxiv:18—"Neither let him that is in the field, *return back* to take his clothes."
4. Mark xiii:16—"And let him that is in the field, not *turn back again* to take up his garment."
5. Luke ii:20—"And the shepherds *returned*, glorifying and praising God.
6. Luke xvii:4—"And seven times in a day *turn again* to thee, saying, I repent thou shalt forgive him."
7. Luke xvii:31—"And he that is in the field, let him likewise not *return back*."
8. I Peter ii:25—"For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now *returned* unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls."
9. II Peter ii:22—"The dog is *turned* to his own vomit again."

BY CAME AGAIN, ONE TIME.

Luke VIII: 55—"And her spirit *came again*, and she arose straightway."

Here the sense is, returned.

BY GO AGAIN, ONE TIME.

Acts xv: 39—"Paul said unto Barnabas, let us *go again* and visit our brethren," that is, let us return and visit them.

From all these passages it will be clearly seen that the leading idea of the original word is that of a turning around or about, a turning from one thing to another, or a change from one position to another. The various usages of the term may all be summed up under three heads.

1. It is used to denote a physical turning, simply a change of position; as, "Jesus turned himself about."

2. It is used to denote a turning in conduct, or course of life, from that which is good to that which is bad, from that which is right to that which is wrong—a perversion; as, "to turn from the holy commandments."

3. It is used to denote a turning from that which is bad to that which is good, from that which is wrong to that which is right; as, "Ye turned to God from idols." This, and this only, is conversion in its theological import, or in its application to man's religious character and conduct.

In six of the eight instances, in which the original term is rendered by the term, *convert*, we find the passive form of the verb in English; as, "Repent ye therefore, and *be converted*," "When thou *art converted*, strengthen thy brethren." This is incorrect and misleading. In all these instances the verb is active and not passive.

In the Revised New Testament, the verb in these instances is not only rendered in the active voice, but also by the word *turn*. The word *convert* is retained only in

James v: 19-20, where it occurs twice and is active both in the common version and in the revision. Hence we read in the Revised Testament, "and should *turn again*, and I should heal them," "when once thou *hast turned again*, establish thy brethren;" "repent ye therefore, and *turn again*, that your sins may be blotted out." Had this plain, literal, and correct rendering of the original term been made by King James' Revisers, neither this discourse, nor any one like it, would ever have been necessary. Such a rendering would have prevented a vast amount of error, delusion, and false teaching; and would have saved all faithful teachers from a great amount of labor that will be necessary just as long as this misleading rendering remains in the version commonly used.

CONVERSION DEFINED.

From this induction of scriptural facts, conversion may be defined as the turning of the whole man in heart and life from the love and practice of sin to the love and service of God, including a change of state, or relationship, towards God. When represented as a turning, it is viewed from the standpoint of man's own agency in receiving the truth and turning away from sin; but when represented as a change, it is viewed from the standpoint of the divinely appointed agencies, and means, by which it is produced. As a turning, it is complete, reversing not only the position and conduct, but also and first the views, desires, and intentions of the mind or heart. As a change, it is deep, thorough and radical, revolutionizing the whole man in every department of his being, and constituting him a new creature in Christ Jesus. Of all the changes which man can experience in this life, this is the greatest.

In the entire investigation of the subject, whether we speak of it as a turning on the part of man himself, or as a change wrought within him by divine means, we will endeavor to keep constantly before our minds both the hu-

man agency and the divine power that are so inseparably connected in this great work.

Conversion, however, is not a single change instantaneously wrought by some mysterious power in some mysterious way; but a series of changes produced by those agencies that God has seen fit to employ, and through that instrument which His wisdom has selected for this purpose. The entire process of conversion may take place within a short period of time, as in the case of the Philippian jailer; but in other cases days and weeks, and even months and years, may intervene, though not necessarily, between the commencement and consummation of the process.

In the second passage selected as the motto of this discourse—"Declaring the *conversion* of the Gentiles"—the term, *conversion*, is evidently used in its most comprehensive sense, embracing all the changes of heart, conduct, and relationship, through which the Gentiles passed in receiving the truth, turning away from their former vanities and idolatries, and attaining recognition as members of the church, or body of Christ on earth. It is in this comprehensive sense that the term will be used throughout this entire series of sermons. I will now present in order the series of changes which I understand to be included in conversion.

I. A CHANGE OF HEART.

Without a deep, thorough, radical change of heart to the utmost extent that the heart is wrong, there can be no true and scriptural conversion. This is a point with reference to which there can be no compromise. It is necessary, therefore, to ascertain at once the scriptural usage and import of the term, heart. Many talk quite flippantly of a change of heart whose language betrays an erroneous conception of the scriptural meaning of the term, and whose conduct manifests a very shallow experience of the

change itself. It is to be feared that physical sensations, produced by fervid appeals to the emotions only, are sometimes taken as evidences of that scriptural change of heart which can be produced only by the gospel of Christ as it is addressed to, and received by, the understanding, the conscience, and the will, or in a word, the whole inner man. These physical sensations are fickle, transient, and unreliable. They constitute a very uncertain basis for our hope in Christ. While we may have them, and often do have them, they are not to be confounded with, nor substituted for, those permanent emotions of love, joy, gratitude, and hope, that flow from an intelligent faith in, and hearty reliance on, Jesus as our Savior.

In the Scriptures men are said to think with the heart, to understand with the heart, to believe with the heart, to love and hate, to trust and fear, to rejoice and grieve with the heart, also to purpose or determine with the heart. Thus used the term, heart, is equivalent to the term, mind, both being used in the broadest sense to denote the whole inner or spiritual man in contrast with the outer or physical man. It is true that both these terms are often used in a limited sense—mind to denote the understanding only, and heart to denote the affections or emotions only. In any given case, we must determine from the context, whether these terms are used in a limited or an unlimited sense.

Without attempting to present a minute or philosophical analysis of the powers or faculties of the human mind or heart, it will answer all practical purposes to say that in accordance with scriptural teaching, the change of heart which is embraced in conversion includes, (1) the enlightenment of the understanding, (2) the conviction of the judgment, (3) the purification of the affections, (4) the quickening of the conscience, and (5) the subjection of the will. A few scriptural facts will place the correct-

ness of this beyond the reach of valid objection.

Paul was sent to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." "To open their eyes" is a metaphorical expression which denotes the enlightenment of the understanding. "To turn them from darkness to light" involves the other changes mentioned above, and completes the change of heart, renewal of mind or renovation of the inner man, without which there can be no genuine conversion. "To turn them from the power of Satan unto the power of God" completes the whole work of conversion, and includes the change of conduct and of relation yet to be considered.

Peter in rehearsing the matter concerning the conversion of the Gentiles says that God put no difference between them and the Jews, "purifying their hearts by faith." This is the purification of the affections and desires, changing them from the love of sin to the love of righteousness. On the day of Pentecost, many who heard the word and witnessed the divine attestation of the apostles' testimony "were cut in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" This covers the entire ground of the change of heart as presented above. They had been enlightened in their understanding with reference to the purpose of God and the character and claims of Jesus, convicted of their own sin in crucifying the Lord of glory, purified in all their desires and affections, quickened in conscience, and thoroughly subdued in will; for their heart-felt cry was an acknowledgment of the fearful indictment that had been made against them, a public confession of their guilt, and an expression of their unconditional surrender to the authority of Jesus as Lord of all.

II. A CHANGE OF CONDUCT.

By conduct is here meant the entire course or direction of life. This change is clearly and forcibly presented by the prophet Isaiah. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon., (Is. LV: 7). The same change is strikingly exemplified in the case of the Ninevites. "Let them turn," said the king, "every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." It is added, "And God saw their work, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto them, and did it not." See Jonah III: 8-10. This thorough change of conduct or manner of life was always inculcated in the preaching of the apostles, and exemplified in all the conversions that resulted from their labors.

Peter said to a Jewish audience, "Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning every one of you from his iniquities." To an audience of Gentiles, Paul said, "we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God." To a similar audience with reference to their former idolatry and that of their ancestors, he said, "And the times of this ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."

Æneas having been healed, it is said that "all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him and turned to the Lord." When the Thessalonians had "received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit," they then "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God." These examples are deemed sufficient to illustrate this change which is an essential element of conversion—a complete reversal of the course or direction of the life. The direction of the life of the unconverted is down-

ward and away from God. In conversion the direction of the life is reversed, and is thereafter upward, heavenward, Godward.

III. A CHANGE IN MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

Out of Christ, men are represented as aliens, as enemies, as strangers, and as children of the wicked one. In Christ, they are represented as citizens, as subjects, as friends, and as the children of God. On the one hand, they are the slaves of sin; on the other they are the servants of God and of righteousness. These are all terms of relationship; and in conversion, man's relationship to God is changed in all these respects. A few passages of holy writ will set this forth in the clearest light.

John 1:12—"But as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

Cor. 1:13—"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

II Cor. vi:17-18—"I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

I Peter 2:9—"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation; a peculiar people," etc.

Eph. 2:16:20—"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."

Gal. 3:26-27—"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

In becoming children of God, in being translated into the kingdom, in being constituted citizens, in being adopted into the family, our relation to God is changed and

this change of relation is the consummating act of conversion. But only those who have been changed in heart and in life can be changed in their relation to God. In this view of the subject, how comprehensive is the work of conversion, revolutionizing the heart, transforming the life, and restoring the relationship of man to God.

To present the whole matter in one view, the process of conversion embraces the following things:—

1. The enlightenment of the understanding;
- 2 The conviction of the judgment;
3. The purification of the affections;
4. The quickening of the conscience;
5. The subjection of the will;
6. The reformation of the life;
7. The restoration of the relationship of man to God.

Five of these are internal, constituting, when taken together, the scriptural change of heart in all its fulness. The last two are external, relating to man's religious conduct and spiritual relationship.

In the enlightenment of the understanding and conviction of the judgment, we find that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which purifies the affections and changes the desires of the heart. In the quickening of the conscience and subduing of the stubborn and rebellious will, we find that repentance toward God which is the turning point in the course of conduct leading to a thorough reformation of life. In the change of man's relation to God, or in his restoration to the enjoyment of the divine favor, we find baptism which is an overt act of obedience, in which the world is renounced, the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ publicly acknowledged, and the scriptural subject brought into covenant relationship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In a word through faith the heart is changed; through repentance the conduct or course of life

is changed; and through baptism the relation to God and the church is changed.

While divine motives and influences are brought to bear on the heart and life of the sinner at every step throughout the entire process, it does not follow by any means that he is a mere passive recipient of the life-giving power, and that he is born again without any volition or action on his own part. This would destroy all responsibility on the part of man. According to the clear teaching of divine truth, it is by hearkening to the divine message, yielding to the divine motives and influences, and seeking the enjoyment of the divine blessing in the use of the divinely appointed means, that the alien turns to God in every department of his being.

The gospel of Christ is the divinely—chosen medium of God's converting or regenerating power. In this gospel men are commanded:

(1). To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;

(2). To repent toward God of all sin;

(3). To be baptized by the authority of Jesus into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This baptism involves the confession or acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord of all, as God's Son and our Savior. Whenever a man thus believes, repents, and is baptized, he is recognized in the Scriptures as a converted man, as a new creature in Christ, as a son of God, and as an heir of heaven. By believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, men turn to the Lord in heart; by repenting of all sin, they turn to the Lord in their conduct or course of life; and by being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, they turn to the Lord in state or relationship.

How thorough the work, how comprehensive the change, how complete the turning, from whatever standpoint it may be viewed. The whole man—body, soul,

and spirit, in heart, life, and relationship—turns to the Lord through a hearty faith, a genuine repentance, and a loving obedience; for the whole man having been corrupted by sin and turned away from God, must be purified in heart, turned away from sin, and brought back to God. Thus a man is born again, becomes a new creature, is delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, that he may walk in newness of life until the Lord shall call him hence to enter on the inheritance of the saints in light.

How boundless the love, how infinite the mercy of our Heavenly Father! He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." From the throne of His mercy, He is ever crying, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

"Sinners, turn—why will you die?

God, your Maker, asks you why;
God who did your being give,
Made you with Himself to live.

Sinners, turn—why will ye die?

Christ, your Savior, asks you why;
He who did your souls retrieve,
He who died that you might live.

Will you let Him die in vain?

Crucify your Lord again?

Why, you ransomed sinners, why
Will you slight His grace and die?

Will you not His grace receive?

Will you still refuse to live?

O, you dying sinners, why—
Why will you forever die?"

Second Sermon.

THE AGENCIES OF CONVERSION.

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.”—John 15: 26, 27, Revised Version.

In every age of the world, our Heavenly Father has seen fit in His wisdom to use subordinate agents in the communication of His will to the human family. To the antediluvians, He spoke through Enoch and other chosen ones down to the days of Noah and the flood. After the flood, He spoke through the Patriarchs unto their own children until He raised up Moses to lead His chosen people out of the land of bondage into the land of Canaan. To the Jews as a distinct people, He spoke through Moses and a long line of illustrious prophets until the light of Jewish prophecy set in Malachi to rise again in John the Baptist, the Morning Star of the Gospel age. Finally, He spoke to the world through His only beloved Son, the greatest and best, and therefore the last, of all His messengers; and this Son still speaks through His own chosen witnesses, the apostles.

In the accomplishment of all His purposes with reference both to nations and individuals, Jehovah has always used intermediate agents both human and divine. He rescued the Israelites from Egyptian bondage through the agency of Moses, and led them into the promised land by the agency of Joshua. He drove out the Canaanites, the measure of whose iniquity was already full, by the agency of those to whom He had given the land. He used Nebuchadnezzar as His agent, not only in destroying wicked and idolatrous nations, but also in punishing His own people for their many and obstinate sins. He after-

ward used Cyrus as His agent to destroy the Babylonian power which He had used so long as the scourge of the whole earth and to restore His own people to the land from which they had been taken away. And in the great scheme of human redemption, He used agents in turning men away from sin drawing them to Himself, and inducting them into the kingdom of His Son.

After all that the Father has done and the Son has suffered, the process of conversion includes the following agencies.

I. The work of the Holy Spirit in relation both to Christ and the sinner.

II. The ministry of the apostles and their inspired co-laborers.

III. The ministry of faithful teachers and preachers of every age.

IV. The work of the church collectively, and of the members individually.

V. The voluntary action of the sinner himself in receiving and obeying the truth.

Of all these agencies, we will treat as fully as the limits of a single discourse will permit.

I. THE AGENCY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit is, and ever has been, the chief agent of conversion. On the personal departure of the risen Savior, the superintendency of the whole scheme of redemption on earth was committed to the Holy Spirit. After Jesus had been exalted by the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit came down in all the plenitude of His power, and entered on that work which is to continue until Jesus returns to raise the dead and judge the world. Of this grand, world-wide and age-lasting work, Jesus gave an explicit summary in his farewell discourse to the apostles on the night in which He was betrayed.

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not

away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you."—John 15: 7-14, R. V. See also John 14: 17-26, and 15: 26-29, also Acts 1: 8.

In these passages, the entire work of the Holy Spirit is briefly yet clearly set forth. This work relates, (1) To Christ; (2) To the apostles; (3) To the church; (4) To the world.

1. TO CHRIST. "He shall bear witness of me."
"He shall glorify me," etc.

2. TO THE APOSTLES. "He shall teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

"He shall guide you into all the truth."

"He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come unto you."

3. TO THE CHURCH. "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."—Jno. 7: 38, 39. "I will pray the father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth: whom the world cannot receive."

Spirit; but in rejecting the gospel of Christ, he resists the converting power of the Holy Spirit, as did those who stopped their ears, rushed upon Stephen, and stoned him to death. All these statements with reference to the agency of the Holy Spirit will be fully verified and exemplified in the succeeding discourses of this series.

II. THE AGENCY OF THE APOSTLES, AND OF THEIR INSPIRED CO-LABORERS.

The Holy Spirit in making known the way of life, did not, even in the miraculous age of the Church, reveal the gospel directly to every mind and heart. He came first to the apostles, filled their minds with the knowledge of the truth and their hearts with the love of God, gave them power to speak with other tongues, and to confirm their testimony by means of signs and wonders which they were enabled to perform; and thus through them as mouthpieces and amanuenses made known both to the Church and the world for all coming time the completed scheme of redemption through Jesus as Lord of all.

Among the subordinate agencies of conversion, the apostles and their inspired assistants must ever hold the first place. They were chosen for the express purpose of making known the gospel to the whole world. In all their ministrations, they spake only "as the Spirit gave them utterance." They were eye and ear witnesses of the power and majesty, the resurrection and ascension, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in this official character they have placed their testimony on record for all coming generations of men. They were and are, the only ambassadors of Christ to all the nations of earth.

To Peter the Savior said,—“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matt. 16: 19.

4. TO THE WORLD. "He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

When the Holy Spirit came to enter on this fourfold work, He came to remain and to carry it onward to its glorious consummation. What He did on the day of Pentecost, excepting only the bestowal of miraculous gifts on special persons for special purposes, He has been doing all along the ages, and is still doing, both for the Church and the world. He is still bearing witness of Jesus as the Christ, and still speaking through the apostles for the conversion of sinners and the edification of Christians. He is still dwelling in the Church and comforting the children of God; still convicting the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, and inviting sinners to come to Jesus that they may be saved.

In convicting of sin, the Holy Spirit shows to man his lost and helpless condition. In setting forth the righteousness of Jesus, He opens up the only way of life and salvation. In declaring the judgment, He presents the great motives that turn men away from sin to seek their loving Heavenly Father and the gracious salvation which He is anxious to bestow upon them.

As the *Advocate* of Jesus, as the *Revealer* of the *Truth*, and as the *Reprover* of the world, the Holy Spirit is the *chief agent* in the conversion of sinners. All other agents are and must ever be, subordinate to this Divine agent, and, in order to be successful in converting men to Christ, must ever teach and labor in accordance with His instructions which are so fully and plainly made known in the Holy Scriptures.

The gospel of Christ is said to be "the ministration of the Spirit." It is also said to be "the law of the Spirit of Life" which makes free from the law—that is the power—of sin and death." In yielding to the gospel of Christ, the sinner yields to the converting power of the Holy

That the other apostles were included in this grant of authority, is evident from John's additional testimony. "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—John 20: 22, 23, R. V.

The Holy Spirit used the tongues of men in reproofing, that is convicting, the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; nor have we any account that He ever spoke to sinners in any other way than through the apostles and other inspired men. It was not until Peter had spoken as the Spirit gave him utterance, that the three thousand were cut in their hearts, and constrained to cry out and say, "Brethren, what shall we do?" When it became necessary for Cornelius and his household to hear the words whereby they might be saved, he was directed by a special messenger from heaven to send for Peter who would tell him what to do. In rehearsing the matter afterward, Peter said: "God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe."

When the Samaritans were to be turned to the Lord, Philip, the evangelist, a man full of the Holy Spirit, was sent to their city to preach the Christ unto them. And "when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." When Jesus was to be preached to the Ethiopian treasurer, the Spirit directed Philip to go and join himself to the chariot. This being done, Philip began at the same scripture which the Eunuch was reading, and preached unto him Jesus. To the Corinthians Paul writes,—“For though you should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.—1 Cor. 4: 15, R. V. He addresses Timothy and Titus as

his own sons in the faith, and says of Onesimus to Philemon, "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds."

The apostles, however, died as other men, what then became of their ministry? It is a happy thing, both for the Church and the world, that, though dead they yet speak the Word of Life in all its fulness and in all its power. The Savior promised to be with them in their ministry to the end of the world, that is to the consummation of the Christian age. They have had no successors in their apostolic ministry, and can have none for the best of all reasons,—their office has never yet been vacated, and never will be during the Christian age. To all intents and purposes, the apostles are as really in the Church of God to-day as they were from the day of Pentecost to the day of their death. They are to-day discharging all the duties and performing all the functions pertaining to their apostolic ministry,—preaching the gospel to sinners, instructing and edifying saints, guiding and ruling the churches.

Death neither vacated their office nor terminated their ministry on earth.

Before they died, they embodied their testimony in a written record that was intended to live on down through all coming ages, and continue to testify of Jesus as the Christ until He himself should return to close the dispensation of His mercy, and introduce the everlasting age. The Spirit of Truth, that guided their tongues, also watched over their pens, and guarded them against mistake or error. Through all the conflicts and changes of eighteen centuries, He has preserved their testimony in all its original simplicity and truthfulness, and still dwells in their word in all His enlightening, convicting, transforming, and comforting power. The only difference between their ministry *then*, and *now*, is simply this: *then* they

ministered through their *oral* testimony; *now* they minister through their *written* testimony. The testimony in itself is the same. All the inspired truth, infallible certainty, and divine power, belonging to or connected with their oral testimony, is still found without any diminution in their written testimony. As long then as the New Testament shall exist, so long will the apostles who were chosen and commissioned by Jesus, continue their ministry as agents in the conversion of sinners.

III. THE AGENCY OF FAITHFUL PREACHERS AND TEACHERS, THOUGH NOT INSPIRED.

Preachers of the word, "faithful men able to teach others," ever have been and still are agents honored of God in the conversion of sinners. Such faithful men were sent out by the apostles during their own personal ministry, and commended to the churches. And when the apostles passed away, on such men devolved the public ministry of the word.

Of Timothy Paul says, "he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." He calls Tychicus "the beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord." To Archippus he sends this admonition,—*"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it."* He speaks to Titus as his "partner and fellow worker." In his letter of instructions to Timothy he says,—*"Take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching. Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee."* (R. V.)

These scriptural facts are sufficient to establish the position that all faithful preachers of the gospel have an important agency in the conversion of sinners. But all such uninspired laborers are limited in the subject-matter of their teaching to what they learn from the apostles. Says Paul to Timothy,—*"And the things which thou*

hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Thus the gospel of Christ in all its saving power is brought to bear on every succeeding generation by faithful men teaching the same things—neither more nor less—that were revealed by the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and by them made known to the world, and then embodied in the New Testament for all subsequent time.

The letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus are full of instruction which is specially adapted to the wants of this class of laborers, constituting when taken together what we may aptly term the "Preacher's Inspired Hand-Book." Without the agency of this class of men, usually styled evangelists, new churches could not be planted to any great extent, and old ones would eventually cease to exist. As in the human body there is a constant waste of the living tissue that has to be supplied by food; so in the Church, the body of Christ, there is a continuous loss through death, that can be supplied only by the addition of new members. This is as true of local churches, as well as of the Church in the aggregate. New members, as a general thing, are brought in by the agency of faithful teachers as Paul describes. Any church then that dispenses with the labor of this class of agents, enters on the way that leads surely and quickly to death.

The preaching of the gospel by faithful men is the chief means which God has ordained for the conversion of sinners and the extension of the kingdom. This is proved beyond all dispute by Paul when he says,—“For seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching (Gr. thing preached) to save them that believe.” This preaching is just as necessary now as it was in the days of the apostles. Then it was

done by men who spake "as the Spirit gave them utterance." Now it is done by faithful men who speak as the "Oracles of God" direct. All the faithful preachers now in the world belong to the Timothean class, and must study the Scriptures in order to show themselves workmen approved of God, setting forth accurately the Word of Truth.



IV. THE AGENCY OF THE CHURCH.

The agency of the Church includes three things: (1) The mission of the Church as a divine institution; (2) The work of all the local churches; (3) The personal influence and activity of all the members of the body.

1. The Church as a whole, as the body of Christ, includes all the saved, and has a mission in and to the world. It is likened to a city set on a hill, the light of which cannot be hidden, but shines upon all the surrounding country. To Isaiah, as he looked in prophetic vision down through the ages, it appeared as "the mountain of the Lord's house," which was "established in the top of the mountain and exalted above the hills" from which lofty elevation it was visible to all the world, shedding its divine light upon the nations, and attracting men from all parts of the earth by its beauty, loveliness, and power. Hence the rapt prophet saw the nations flowing unto it, and heard men of every tongue saying, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." To Daniel it appeared as a kingdom, breaking into pieces all other kingdoms, filling the earth with its power and glory, and standing forever. By John the Church is represented as the Bride, the Lamb's wife; and in this lovely and exalted character she is always inviting sinners to come to Jesus that they may be healed and live forever. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come," and will continue to say, "Come," until the door

of mercy is closed by the coming of Jesus himself to judge the world.

The prayer of the Savior, as He was about to be delivered up to death, assigns to the Church a grand mission on earth. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: *"that the world may believe that thou didst send me."*—John 17: 20. 21, R. V.

 THE CHURCH IN ITS UNITY IS TO WIELD THE POWER THAT WILL CONVERT THE WORLD. 

2. Every local church should be a representative in miniature of the "Church which is the body of Christ." The church of the Thessalonians "sounded out the word of the Lord in all Macedonia and Achaia." The church at Corinth was a living letter both of Paul and of Christ "known and read of all men." The faith of the church at Rome was spoken of throughout the whole world. The seven churches of Asia were represented in symbol by seven golden lampstands, showing that they were light-bearers to those who dwell in darkness and danger.

As the continued existence and prosperity of every local church depends on the addition of new members from time to time, every such church must, as a matter of necessity as well as duty, put forth direct efforts for the conversion of sinners, or submit to inevitable decay and death. These new recruits from the world are the only source of supply: for in this respect the church both local and general is like an army. As the veterans fall out of the ranks through death, those newly enlisted must take their places. Even those services of the church, the main object of which is to edify the members, and in which only Christians can engage, are calculated, if properly observed, to impress sinners with the beauty and power of holiness, and thus draw them to Christ. In proportion as the gen-

uine converts from the world exceed in number the losses by desertion and death, to that extent are the local churches fulfilling their mission in this respect, and to the same extent the kingdom is spreading. Whenever a church fails for any considerable period of time to have additions by the genuine conversion of sinners, there is something wrong which should be set right at once. Either the church is not diligently using the means which God has ordained for this purpose, or some of the members, if not all, are by their conduct throwing stumbling blocks in the way of sinners, and thus turning them away from the truth instead of bringing them under its power.

3. Every disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus is called to be an agent in the conversion of sinners. In the SERMON ON THE MOUNT, Jesus says to the disciples—"Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand, and it shineth unto all that are in the house. *Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven.*" This admonition is repeated by the apostle Peter in language almost identical. "Having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil doers, *they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of the visitation.*"—R. V.

After the death of Stephen, a great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem, and the disciples were all scattered abroad except the apostles. These dispersed disciples, realizing the responsibility that rested upon them, "went about preaching the word." Persecution might drive them from their homes, but could not silence their tongues, or quench the light of their godly lives. They were unlike many of the present day, who on removing voluntarily to a new place, never let it be known that

they are, or ever have been disciples of Jesus. All such hide out, or utterly quench their light, if they ever had any. Some of these dispersed disciples, when they came to Antioch, "spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." God recognized and blessed their efforts; for it is said that the "hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord."

We are not to infer from these statements that all or any of these disciples preached in the modern technical sense of the term, that of sermonizing; but that wherever they went they told the story of the cross; and announced that Jesus had arisen from the dead and had been exalted by the right hand of God. They also related, we may be sure, the wonderful events that occurred on the day of Pentecost and afterward down to the day of their dispersion. This simple recital of the facts of the gospel, and of their own joy in believing, resulted through the blessing of God in the conversion of a great number of people both Jews and Gentiles. The dissemination of the truth in a quiet, humble way, in plainness and love, is one of the most effective methods of preaching. Aquila and Priscilla, humble disciples, expounded the way of the Lord more perfectly to the eloquent Apollos. They were also for some time associated with the apostle Paul in his labors; and he calls them his "helpers in Christ." In his letter to the Philippians, he commends as worthy of help certain women who labored with him in the gospel.

From these passages, and many more of similar import, we learn that in the primitive churches all the members, both male and female, labored to the extent of their ability and opportunity to turn men away from sin and bring them to Jesus. That all the disciples of Jesus at all times and in all places have an important agency in the conversion of sinners, is evident from that commission which was given by our glorified Redeemer through the

beloved John, not only to the Church as his Bride, but to every member of His body on earth. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come! And *he that heareth, let him say, Come!*" By "the Bride" is meant the Church in the aggregate,—the Church which is the body of Christ. By him that heareth, is meant every disciple of Jesus in his own personal responsibility to God and man. Every member therefore of Christ's body is here authorized to invite sinners to come and be saved.

All can and should preach Christ *in example*, living "soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." All can and should preach Christ *in word*, telling sinners what a precious Savior He is, and pointing out to them the way in which they may come to Him. All can and should preach Christ *in proxy* by giving a hearty moral and financial support to those who devote their whole time to the ministry of the word. All can and should preach Christ *in love* by visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, supplying the wants of the destitute, waiting on the sick, and comforting the distressed.

How great the responsibility that rests on every disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus! Brethren, let us endeavor to realize this responsibility. Let us strive to let our light so shine that men may see our good works and be led to glorify our Heavenly Father. In our daily life, let us preach Christ both by precept and example. Let us neglect no opportunity of pointing sinners to the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Let us "always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor in the Lord is not in vain."

V. THE AGENCY OF THE SINNER HIMSELF.

The agency of the sinner in his own conversion is clearly implied in the great commission given by Jesus after He arose from the dead. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," or to the whole

creation.” If men are not active in their own conversion, that is *in turning to the Lord*, why preach to them? why command them? why threaten them? why exhort them? why plead with them? If they have no power to turn, but must wait passively until the Lord turns them without any responsive action on their part, then they cannot be responsible for their own condition. If they are not converted, it is simply because the Lord does not bring sufficient power to bear upon them to turn them. If the sinner is not an agent in his own conversion, how can it be said with truth that he either receives or rejects the gospel? The Savior authoritatively adds,—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” If the sinner has the power to believe and obey the gospel on the one hand, or to disbelieve and disobey it on the other, it follows conclusively that he is an agent in his own conversion.

The gospel is addressed to those only who are capable of understanding, believing and obeying it, in order to the enjoyment of its promised blessings. And as it is the sinner himself who is to hear and understand, to believe and to obey, it follows irresistibly that he is and must be an agent in turning to the Lord. It is also true that unless he exercises this agency, he cannot be saved. Every commandment, admonition, and invitation that is addressed to the sinner in the Holy Scriptures, implies his own agency in his own conversion.

The fact is here recognized that God draws men to Jesus as their Savior; and that unless they are drawn to God, they neither will nor can come. But God does not draw men to His Son by physical power, nor by any other power that is absolutely irresistible. The Savior explains this drawing when He says: “It is written in the prophets, *and they shall all be taught of God*. Every one that has heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto

me.” The divine agency is put forth through teaching, and thus the Father draws men to the Son. Human agency on the part of the sinner is put forth in hearing, learning, and coming; and thus sinners yield to God’s drawing power, turn to the Savior and are healed. Divine agency and human agency are both necessary to the conversion of the sinner. Without the divine agency, there would be no cause; without human agency there would be no result.

God through the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the ministry of the apostles, the labor of all faithful preachers, and the personal example and influence of His people, brings all His converting or turning power to bear on the sinner’s heart and life. The sinner in the exercise of that agency with which God has endowed him, either yields to or resists this converting power; and thus either turns to the Lord and is saved, or puts away from himself the means of salvation.

To the enraged multitude before him, Stephen uttered this burning reproof:—“Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye always do resist the Holy Spirit*; as your fathers did, so do ye,”—Acts 7:51. To the contradicting and blaspheming Jews, Paul said:—It was necessary that the word of God”—the medium of God’s converting power—“should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.”—Act 13: 46. The Jews of Berea were more noble than those of Thessalonica “in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and examined the Scriptures daily whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed,” etc.—Acts 17: 11, 12.

In the broad contrast here presented we have the sinner’s agency in his own conversion, clearly, forcibly, and unmistakably set before us. In the one case, the parties

wilfully rejected the love and mercy of God, and remained in a state of sin and condemnation. In the other case they received the word with readiness of mind, yielded to its tender invitations, obeyed its holy requirements, and entered into the enjoyment of its gracious blessings.

Sinner! the Savior stands at the door of your heart knocking in mercy, and asking for admittance. You have the power to open and let Him in, and you have the power to bar the door and keep Him out. God is ever drawing you by His love, and beseeching you to look unto Him and be saved. You can turn to Him and live, or you can turn away from Him and die. Which will you do? It is yours to decide; and as you decide you choose your own destiny for weal or woe. The issue of everlasting life or endless death is at stake. Why will you die? O sinner! Will you not listen to the call of mercy, turn to the Lord, and live forever.

“O turn you! O turn you! for why will you die?
When God in His mercy is drawing so nigh!
Now Jesus invites you, the Spirit says, Come,
The brethren are waiting to welcome you home.

How vain the delusion that while you delay,
Your hearts may grow better by staying away!
Come wretched, come starving, come just as you be,
Here streams of salvation are flowing most free.

Why will you be starving and feeding on air?
There's mercy in Jesus, enough and to spare;
If still you are doubting, make trial and see,
And prove that His mercy is boundless and free.”

Third Sermon.

THE INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION.

“THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD.”—Luke, 8: 11.

In all investigations, it is of the highest importance to ascertain the exact import of the terms used. The want of a clear and correct definition of terms has often led to long, fierce and mischievous controversies. So long as two parties use the same terms in different senses, so long will it be impossible for them to understand each other; and one, if not both will fail to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.

No terms are more frequently confounded than the terms *agent* and *instrument* and their derivatives, *agency* and *instrumentality*; and yet there are no terms more distinct in their primary import and proper application. In this series of discourses, the term *agent* is applied to *persons* only; the term *instrument*, to *things* only. The difference between an agent and an instrument may be illustrated by the difference between a writer and his pen, a soldier and his sword, a blacksmith and his hammer. The writer and the soldier and the blacksmith are agents; the pen and the sword and the hammer are instruments.

I am well aware of the fact that these terms, especially their derivatives, *agency* and *instrumentality*, are often used interchangeably even by the best writers; and that each is given by our standard lexicographers as a meaning of the other, not as the primary import of the other, but as its third or fourth usage. I am not speaking, however, of the loose application of words in their popular currency, or of their remote signification according to recognized authority, but of their strict etymological import. In this respect, the distinction which I have drawn between these terms, is strictly correct.

The popular usage of these terms is often at fault. We speak of our instrumentality in the accomplishment of some work when we should speak of our agency. Man is not a mere instrument, but an agent, acting in accordance with his own purposes and desires, or voluntarily yielding to the purposes and desires of others. It is an expression of profound contempt for a man to represent him as merely the instrument, that is the *tool* of another. It is equivalent to saying that he has thrown away his manhood and degraded himself into a mere thing. God does not thus degrade men. He never uses his "sons and daughters" as mere instruments or tools; but He does use them as agents as was clearly shown in the preceding discourse.

It is true that in a highly-wrought prophecy Sennacherib in the hand of God is represented as an ax or a saw in the hand of a man; yet the context clearly shows that neither the volition nor the conduct of this invader was in the least degree coerced. After stating the purposes which God intended to accomplish through the agency of Sennacherib, the prophet adds with reference to Sennacherib himself, "Howbeit, he meaneth not so; but it is in his heart to destroy nations not a few." Sennacherib had one purpose in going up against Jerusalem; but God had another in permitting him to go. Sennacherib went of his own accord, to gratify the desires of his own heart, and to accomplish the object of his own mad ambition. God, who at the same time had a matter to settle with His own people, permitted Sennacherib to go far enough to punish and humble the children of Israel, and cause them to turn to Jehovah their Lord for deliverance, and then He laid the hand of correction on the haughty conqueror himself, and led him back in humiliation and disgrace into his own country. God used the agency of Sennacherib—his thoughts, desires, purposes and efforts—as easily as a man

can use an ax or a saw. We are thus particular in our prefatory remarks, that all may clearly see that in treating of the truth as the instrument of conversion, we are discussing a part of the subject which is wholly distinct from the agencies of conversion. In the preceding sermon, we considered the agents who are employed in the conversion of sinners. It is the object of this discourse to set forth clearly, and as fully as time will allow, the instrumentality of the truth in all cases of conversion. To get the subject plainly and pointedly before your minds, the following proposition is presented:

The Word of Truth is the instrumental medium of God's converting power.

To avoid misapprehension and to cut off all occasion for misrepresentation, especial attention is called to a few plain statements. (1.) In this proposition, the phrase, "*the Word of Truth*," is used in its broad scriptural import as equivalent to the phrases, "*the Gospel of Christ*," "*the Gospel of Our Salvation*," "*the Word of the Lord*," "*all the Words of this Life*," etc., all covering and including the whole plan of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2.) Not only in this discourse, but throughout the entire series, we have in view that class of men and women only to whom the gospel is addressed,—those who are capable of receiving its truths, obeying its precepts, and enjoying its blessings. You and I, my friendly hearers, belong to this class, and we will best consult our own interests by considering our own responsibility, instead of perplexing our own minds about the condition of irresponsible beings to whom the gospel is not addressed, and who are incapable in this life of enjoying any of its blessings.

(3.) The proposition does not raise a question of power on the part of God, but a question of fact in the di-

vine economy. It does not relate to what *might have been* the medium of God's converting power, but to what *is* that medium. It does not limit the power of God either here or hereafter; but it does limit men to the use of the means which God in His wisdom and mercy has selected for the accomplishment of His own purposes. With these explanations we proceed.

I. THE SCRIPTURES PLAINLY AND EXPRESSLY ASSERT THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE TRUTH IN CONVERSION.

In proof of this proposition it is necessary to cite only a few of the many passages that might be adduced.

James 1: 8.—“Of his own will *begat he us with the word of truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures”. In this passage, the instrumentality of the truth is so expressly asserted that it needs no comment. We might as well deny that the Father begets, as to deny that He uses the *Word of Truth* as the instrument or medium of His quickening power. The one is just as clearly taught as the other. Nor does the latter rob God of any of His glory, for is not the *Word of Truth His own Word*, and the power thereof *His own power*?

I Cor. 4: 15.—“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I *have begotten you through the gospel*.” This passage is parallel with the preceding. Paul represents himself as the spiritual father of the saints at Corinth, and the gospel as the medium through which he had begotten them. But how could Paul beget them, when it is God who begets, and that too of His own will? When we consider the fact that God employs agents to wield the instrument by means of which His quickening power is brought to bear on human hearts, we will see that the two statements perfectly harmonize. God begat them of His own will, it is true; but He did this through the agency of Paul and the instrumentality of the truth, and in this view

only, could Paul say,—“In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”

In what is called the intercessory prayer of Jesus, found in the 17th chapter of John, after praying for the apostles he adds,—“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also *who believe on me through their word*,” etc. This petition embraces all converted persons from the beginning of the apostolic ministry down to the end of the Gospel age. All who believe on Jesus as God’s son and their own Savior, must do so through the word or testimony of the apostles. “*Their word*” will never be superseded by any other means of faith, nor will any additional testimony be added until the Lord comes to judge the world. In this passage, as in many others, the term, *believe*, is used to cover the whole ground of conversion, including the three fold change of heart and life and relationship.

Rom. 1:16.—“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; *for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth*, to the Jew first, and also the Greek”. It was in view of this, its life-giving power as the seed of the kingdom, that Paul so earnestly desired to preach the gospel at Rome also that he might have some fruit among the Romans as among other Gentiles.

The Psalmist had a vivid conception of the instrumentality of the truth in the accomplishment of the divine purposes concerning men.—Ps. 19: 7-11.

“The law of Jehovah is perfect restoring the soul:

The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart:

The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of Jehovah are true, and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold.

Sweeter also than honey and the honey comb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned. In keeping of them there is great reward." (R. V.) It is God alone who restores, makes wise, gives joy and sheds light over the entire pathway of life; but He does all these things by means of His law, testimony, statutes, precepts and promises.

Finally on this point, the commission itself establishes beyond the power of successful controversy, the instrumentality of the truth in the conversion of sinners throughout the Gospel age. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (R. V.) Believes what? Believes *the Gospel*; "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Disbelieves what? Disbelieves *the Gospel*; for it is also the power of God unto condemnation to every one that disbelieves. Again He said unto them.—"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses; both in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (R. V.)

It was with reference to the testimony that they were to deliver concerning Him, that he said,—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world,” or “all the days even unto the consummation of the age.” The testimony of the apostles yet lives, and Jesus is yet with them in all His saving power, and will remain with them in that testimony until the door of mercy is forever closed.

II. THE FIGURES USED WITH REFERENCE TO THE WORD OF TRUTH REPRESENT IT AS THE INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION.

The *Parable of the Sower* presents a beautiful and

forcible illustration of the instrumentality and the power of the truth. I quote the Savior's explanation of this parable. as given by Luke, 8: 11-15. "Now the parable is this: The *seed* is the *word* of God. And those by the wayside are those that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, *that they may not believe and be saved*. And those on the rock are they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life and bring no fruit to perfection. And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, have heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience." (R. V.)

From this explanation of the parable, it is evident that the word of God sustains the same relation to spiritual life that seed sustains to vegetable life. Not only is the life-giving power of the truth manifested in the fruit yielded by the good ground, but also if possible in a higher degree, by the conduct of Satan with regard to the wayside hearers. These are the most hardened sinners, the most hopeless cases: yet Satan fears to let the word, the life-begetting seed, remain in their hearts even for a time. He comes *immediately*, as Mark says, and *sntaches away* the word *violently*, like a wild beast seizing its prey, which the word used by Mathew implies. Why this hasty and violent action on the part of Satan? Why his eager desire to snatch the word out of the hardened heart of the way-side hearer? Because he knows full well its power, having been vanquished by it in many a hard fought battle. He knows that if this living and indestructible seed is permitted to remain even on the wayside, it will soften, break up, pulverize and quicken the sin-trodden heart, make it

leap for joy and throb with the pulsation of a new life.

While the word is fitly represented as seed, it is at the same time more than seed. This figure does not exhaust its power, or present its only use. It is a many-sided instrument; and is divinely adapted to the accomplishment of various purposes. In one point of view it is a *lamp*, shedding light along the pathway of man; in another it is a sharp two-edged *sword*, piercing the heart with conviction of sin, and slaying its enmity towards God and Christ. From one standpoint, it is represented as seed germinating, and bringing forth fruit unto eternal life; from another, "as a fire," and "as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." In one respect, it is like food that sustains life; in another, it is like water that quenches thirst. It is because of this manifold power of the word that Satan snatches it out of the heart of the wayside hearers, "*Lest they should believe and be saved.*"

In perfect accord with the Savior's teaching in this parable, Peter represents all the saved as "having been *begotten again*, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*, through the word of God, which *liveth* and *abideth*."—I Pet. 1:23. (R. V.) This passage not only represents the word of God as the chosen means by which new life is implanted within our hearts, but also asserts that, as the seed of the kingdom, it possesses an inherent vitality that never decays, and cannot be destroyed. In this respect it is totally unlike the seeds of the physical world. These are corruptible. They often decay, and thus lose their vitality; or they may be crushed, and their vitality thus be destroyed. It is not so however, with the word of God; for it lives and abides forever. Peter adds,—"*And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*" It is the word preached by the apostles that is life-begetting and indestructible.

These facts utterly explode the false and pernicious

idea that the word of God is a "dead letter," and is utterly powerless until the Holy Spirit breathes upon it, and vitalizes it in some way utterly unknown to the minds of men. The Holy Spirit breathed this word of truth into the minds of the apostles, and through them made it known to the world. Then the Holy Spirit through the same agency embodied this word of salvation into a living record for all coming time. The quickening power which the Holy Spirit imparted to the gospel when first revealed, it still retains in undiminished strength. Satan is never so successful in snatching this life-giving seed out of human hearts as when he succeeds in persuading men that it is a "dead letter." When he has done this, he has robbed them of the divinely ordained means of their own salvation. Lord, forbid that any of thy ministering servants should ever make of himself a very devil's bird in this soul-destroying work.

It may here occur to the minds of some that Paul says, "The letter killeth: but the Spirit giveth life." The letter, however, which Paul says kills is by no means the gospel of Christ which, he says, is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and if it were, to say that it kills is to invest it with a fearful power, and to make it anything but a dead letter. Can a corpse kill a living man? Can one corpse kill another corpse? Can one dead thing take the life of another dead thing that never had any life? Into what monstrous absurdities men fall when they turn away from the simplicity of the truth! In some systems of theology, the figurative expression, "dead in trespasses and sins," is taken literally; and men are represented as so utterly dead that they cannot understand the gospel much less obey it. To all who are out of Christ, the gospel is a "dead letter," according to this theory; and yet according to the same theory, this "dead letter" kills the dead man in order that life may in

some way be evolved. This is, on the one hand, the deadest thing the theology of the dark ages ever invented; and, on the other, an evolution that leaves Darwin and all his followers far behind.

When Paul said, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life," he was contrasting the Old Testament with the New—the law of Moses with the gospel of Christ. He calls the Old Testament dispensation with all its cumbersome rites and ceremonies, the "letter that kills;" and the New Testament dispensation with all its gracious means, "the Spirit that gives life." The law of Moses is characterized as "the ministration of death;" the gospel of Christ, as "the ministration of life." Both, however, were living powers for the accomplishment of the purposes for which they were given. The law thundered its condemnation against all sinners, and in this sense killed; but it could not as law bring in life and salvation. The gospel of Christ revealed all the gracious means of man's redemption, and thus gives life to all who receive it. The entire argument of the apostle is a strong confirmation of the instrumentality and power of the truth. See II Cor. 3: 6-9.

But to sum up this part of the argument: When fruits can be raised without seed, when life can be sustained without food, when thirst can be quenched without water, when darkness can be dissipated without light, when great rocks can be broken without fire and hammer, then, and not till then, may we expect to see sinners converted to Christ without the instrumentality of that living Word which is the Seed of the kingdom.

III. THE HISTORY OF CONVERSIONS, FOUND IN THE ACTS OF APOSTLES, DEMONSTRATES THE FACT THAT IN ALL CASES THE WORD OF TRUTH IS THE INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION.

This part of the subject will here be treated with brevity, as the leading cases of conversion will be considered

in detail in subsequent discourses.

Although a wonderful manifestation of divine power occurred on the day of Pentecost, yet it was not until the people had heard the discourse of Peter which set forth the risen and exalted Jesus as both Lord and Christ, that they were pierced in their hearts, and said, "Brethren what shall we do?" And only those who gladly received the word, were baptized; for such only were prepared in heart and life to submit to this initiatory institution.

As the result of the second discourse of the same apostle, which was called forth by the healing of the lame man, it is said,—“Howbeit, many of them who heard the word, believed;” but it is not recorded that any believed who had not heard the word. Indeed they could not believe in Jesus without hearing the testimony concerning Him.

While Cornelius was fasting and praying, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said,—“Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God:” yet it was necessary for him to send for Peter and to hear words by means of which he and his house might be saved. Peter in rehearsing the matter says,—“God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.”

Saul of Tarsus heard from the voice of the glorified Redeemer himself the great foundation truth of the kingdom, and hearing, believed; yet he still had to learn from Ananias “the things appointed for him to do.” While he was called to the apostleship in an extraordinary manner, yet it is nevertheless true that in hearing, believing and obeying the truth, he turned away from sin and became a devoted follower of the meek and lowly Jesus.

It was while Lydia was hearing the word, that the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things which were spoken by Paul and Silas.

With reference to the conversion of the Corinthians, it is simply stated that "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." Their baptism resulted from their faith in Jesus; and their faith in Jesus came through the hearing of the word of truth. But not to multiply examples, we call attention to the fact, that there is not a case of conversion, mentioned in the Acts or alluded to in the Epistles, that is not attributed to the instrumentality of the truth, as well as the agency of the Holy Spirit. Nor in all the ages that have passed away since the visions, which were granted to John in the isle of Patmos, closed the Book of Revealed Truth, has any one ever believed in Jesus, turned away from his sins, and given himself to the Lord in baptism, who never heard the gospel of Christ. "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?" As God has constituted the human mind, a man could as easily create a world, as he could believe in a Savior of whom he had never heard.

Without testimony, the exercise of faith is a mental and moral impossibility. Paul covers the whole ground, and settles the question in Rom. 10: 17, which, as correctly rendered by Rotherham, reads, "Hence faith comes out of what is heard; and that which is heard, through a declaration of Christ."

In view of all these facts, do we not see and feel the vast import of the commission given by the risen Savior to his chosen apostles?—"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations;" "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Bear this life-giving message to the ends of the earth, that the dying sons and daughters of men may hear and live.

O, sinner! will you not receive this divine seed into an honest and understanding heart that it may bring forth fruit unto life eternal? "Incline your ear and come unto me," says your Heavenly Father, "hear and your soul

shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Will you not heed the gracious invitation? Can you reject such overtures of mercy? Life is passing, death is approaching, and soon for you the day of mercy will be o'er. Be wise therefore; and while you have the time and the opportunity, come to Jesus, and be at rest.

"Come' all you souls by sin oppressed,
You weary wanderers after rest;
You poor and maimed, and halt and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

The message, as from God, receive—
You all may come to Christ and live;
O let his love your heart's constrain,
Nor suffer Him to call in vain.

This is the time—no more delay:
The Savior calls you all to-day;
O may His call effectual prove!
Accept the offer of his love!"

When we have received this life-giving and incorruptible seed into our own hearts, and have been quickened by it into a new life, we are not to sit still and enjoy it alone, or only with our own race and country; we are to send it forth to all the nations, that they too may receive its light, feel its power, and partake of its life. The disciples who were scattered abroad by the first persecution that fell upon the Church, went everywhere *preaching the word*. The Church of the Thessalonians *sounded out the word* not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place, so that their faith was spread abroad. The Philippians were exhorted to *shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life*. May the Church of this age arise in her strength, put on her beautiful garments of sal-

vation, and girt with truth, grasp the sword of the Spirit
and go forth to the conquest of the world for her Lord and
Savior!

“Sound, sound the truth abroad!
Bear ye the word of God
Through the wide world;
Tell what our Lord has done,
Tell how the day is won,
Till from his lofty throne
Satan is hurled.

Far over sea and land,
Go at your Lord's command,
Bear ye His name;
Bear it to every shore,
Regions unknown explore,
Enter at every door;
Silence is shame.

Speed on the wings of love;
Jesus who reigns above
Bids us to fly;
They who his message bear
Should neither doubt nor fear;
He will their friend appear,
He will be nigh.

When on the mighty deep,
He will their spirits keep,
Stayed on his word;
When in a foreign land,
No other friend at hand,
Jesus will by them stand,
Jesus their lord.”

Fourth Sermon.

THE RULE OF CONVERSION.

For, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was shewed thee in the mount."—Heb. 8: 5. (R. V.)

Whenever our Heavenly Father has required any special work at the hands of His chosen servants, He has given them a *pattern* or *rule* by which they were to be guided in the performance of their appointed task.

When He commanded Noah to build an ark for the saving of himself and house, He gave him a pattern of the vessel, fixing its dimensions, describing its various apartments, selecting its materials and showing the manner in which the whole building should be finished. And to the praise of Noah, it is said, "According to all that God commanded him, so did he."

When a tabernacle was to be reared, in which Jehovah could meet with His chosen people while they were wandering around in the wilderness, and afterward contending for the possession of the land promised to them, a pattern or model was given to Moses in accordance with which he was to construct this movable temple. This pattern fills three chapters of the book of Exodus and relates not only to the dimensions and apartments of the tabernacle, but also to its materials and furniture, its pillars and its coverings, its curtains and its fastenings; the most explicit directions being given with reference even to the smallest things pertaining to this unique structure. "See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount."

When the wanderings of the Hebrews had ceased,

and they had gained possession of the promised land, it became necessary that a permanent house should be erected, in which Jehovah could manifest His presence among His people, and assure them from year to year of the forgiveness of their sins. The pattern or model of this unparalleled structure with minute directions as to the materials, construction and arrangement of everything which was a part of it, or in any way connected with it, was given to David in the latter part of his reign, although he was not permitted to build the house himself. This plan in all its details was given in solemn charge to Solomon by his dying father. To the building of this house of the Lord, Solomon devoted seven years of his peaceful reign, employing the most skillful workmen who could be found in all the land of Israel or among other nations. All things were done in exact accordance with the exact pattern given to his father David.

So when our Lord and Savior would build up a "spiritual house" of "living stones" for a "habitation of God through the Spirit," of which the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon were only types, He gave to His chief architects, the apostles, the pattern of this spiritual house, and the rule by which they were to be guided in preparing these *living stones* and fitting them into this *living temple*.

If it behooved Noah to make the ark, Moses the tabernacle, and Solomon the temple, in exact accordance with the pattern given, although these structures were only temporary arrangements at best and composed of perishable materials; then most assuredly, in building up this living "temple of God" which is to stand until Jesus returns to judge the world, and then be crowned with immortal glory, it behooved the apostles to make all things and do all things in perfect accordance with the rule or directions given them by their risen Lord and Savior.

THE RULE OF CONVERSION, the observance of which

is to be co-extensive with the Christian age, is found in the commission given to the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus, and in view of His exaltation by the right hand of God. The fact that the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles in all the plenitude of His power to be an ever present *paraclete*, that is *guide, monitor, helper and comforter*, does not in any degree detract from the importance, or the infallible authority of the commission as *the rule of conversion*.

One of the offices of the Holy Spirit in behalf of the apostles was to bring to their remembrance all things Jesus had said to them. Among these things, the commission held a prominent place, and must have been constantly before their minds, inasmuch as it embodied the authority by which they were sent, marked out their field of labor, and prescribed the rule by which they were to work in all their efforts to convert sinners and to edify saints.

Although the commission was given to the apostles chiefly, and was intended to guide them in their labors to the end of their personal ministry; yet it was not confined to them alone, for other disciples were present when it was first given, and other laborers were always associated with them: nor was it to be laid aside by the churches, or the preachers whom the churches sent out, after the death of the apostles. By the Holy Spirit the apostles were led to incorporate it in their testimony concerning Jesus, and thus to commit it to the churches and bind it on all faithful evangelists and teachers to the end of the Gospel dispensation. Indeed in the commission itself we find the authority for its transmission from the apostles to the churches planted by them; and these churches were to plant others by sounding out the same "word of salvation," and thus the glad tidings would roll onward to the end of time. In addition to this, Paul charges Timothy to commit the things learned of him among many witnesses

to faithful men that they might be able to teach others also.

From these facts we think we are sustained in the conclusion that the APOSTOLIC COMMISSION is the RULE OF CONVERSION for the entire period of the GOSPEL AGE.

No one of the four witnesses gives the entire commission in all its details. Matthew, in the words of the Savior spoken on a mountain in Galilee, gives a summary statement covering the whole ground of the work which the apostles were to do; but the whole commission had been given to them in detail previous to this time. This was done at the first interview between Jesus and the assembled disciples on the night after He arose from the dead. John and Luke both give the first part of the Savior's discourse at that interview, each omitting some things that were related by the other. Luke alone gives the second part of this discourse. Mark merely alludes to the first part, omits the second, but gives the third or concluding part which is omitted by John and Luke both. Matthew does not refer to this interview at all, or to any other except the one that occurred on the mountain in Galilee some two or three weeks after Jesus arose from the dead.

Some have fallen into the habit of speaking of Matthew's *version*, Mark's *version*, Luke's *version* and John's *version* of the commission; as if each had given in his own language his own understanding of what Jesus said when He gave the commission for the first time, each agreeing in substance with all the others, but differing from them in words. This representation of the matter is incorrect and misleading. Instead of giving his own version of the same words of the Savior, each one reports words that were actually spoken by Him in different discourses, or in different parts of the same discourse. John, Luke, and Mark report different parts of the same discourse, and Matthew a different discourse delivered not only at another time, but also at a different place. In this statement, I have in view

only those accounts in each of which the commission is found in part. Let us then quit talking about different *versions* of the commission, and try to get a comprehensive view of the commission itself in all its completeness.

By combining the reports of John and Luke and Mark in the order here named, we get a logical view of the commission in all its parts; and when we have studied this connected discourse of the Savior until we get a clear view of the commission as a whole, then we will be prepared to see in its proper light that grand summary of the whole matter which Jesus himself gave to His disciples when He met them at the appointed time and place in Galilee.

When Jesus arose from the dead, He appeared to Mary Magdalene first of all; and soon afterward, as it appears from the record, to the other women who had also gone to the sepulcher. At some time within the day, He appeared to Peter; and late in the afternoon to the two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus. Being recognized by them as they sat at meat, He immediately vanished out of their sight. They at once returned to Jerusalem where they found the apostles and others already assembled and earnestly engaged in discussing the wonderful event that had been reported to them, and of which some of them were already witnesses, saying. "The Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." No sooner had the two apostles joined themselves unto this company, and reported what had occurred to them, than Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and greeted them by saying, "Peace be unto you." It was at this interview that Jesus laid before the assembled disciples the great work to which He had called them.

I will now cite the three reports of this first interview of the risen Savior with the assembled disciples, using the Revised Testament from which most quotations will hereafter be made.

JOHN'S REPORT. (Chapter 20:19-23.)

"When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." And when He said this, He shewed unto them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This is all that John relates of this interview, consisting mainly of what the other witnesses had omitted. After stating that Thomas was not present at this interview, and that he refused to receive the testimony of the other disciples who had seen Jesus. John passes at once to the next appearance of Jesus on the eighth day afterwards, the main object of which seems to have been to convince Thomas, as that which passed between Jesus and Thomas is all that is reported of this interview. John then devotes the last chapter of his testimony to the interview at the sea of Tiberias.

LUKE'S REPORT. (Chapter 24:36-49.)

"And as they spake these things, He himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had beheld a spirit. And he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? And wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having." And when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and His feet. And

while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, "Have ye here any thing to eat?" And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish. And He took it, and did eat before them. And He said unto them, "These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me." Then opened He their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures; and He said unto them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."

So far Luke testifies of this first interview, giving much more of the Savior's discourse than either John or Mark, more indeed than both of them. He passes in silence over the forty days that intervened between the first and last appearance of Jesus to his disciples and then in conclusion briefly mentions the last interview, the ascension of Jesus, and the return of the disciples to the city, there to await the bestowal of the promised power from on high:

MARK'S REPORT. (Chapter 16: 14-18.)

"And afterward He was manifest unto the eleven themselves as they sat at meat; and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen, and He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my

name they shall cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Thus Mark closes his report of words uttered by the risen Savior at this soul-thrilling interview. Like Luke, he passes in silence over the forty intervening days and then closes his testimony with two statements, the one referring to the ascension of Jesus, the other to the preaching of the apostles. I will now endeavor to present in regular order the leading points which are developed in these three reports.

I THE SALUTATION.

"*Peace be unto you.*" According to the testimony of both Luke and John these were the first words spoken by Jesus to the astonished and fear stricken disciples, when He so suddenly and so unexpectedly appeared among them. How appropriate, how significant, how full of comfort and joy, was this gracious salutation! How well calculated were these loving words, so lovingly spoken, to dispel their doubts, allay their fears, and open their hearts to receive what He had to say to them! That peace which they were to offer to the world through Him, they were to realize in their own experience. This would ever be to them not only a source of joy, but also a source of strength. He that preaches to others must feel in his own soul and realize in his own life, the truth and power of that gospel which He commends to the world, or else his ministrations will be as "sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal."

2. THE REALITY OF CHRIST'S BODILY APPEARANCE.

This is explicitly stated by all of the witnesses whose testimony we have already cited. John simply states that he showed them His hands and His side, and that they were glad when they saw the Lord. Luke presents the

matter more in detail, and probably relates to all that the Lord said to them on this point. He states that they were frightened, supposing that they had seen a spirit—an apparition, what is now called a *ghost*—that Jesus tenderly expostulated with them, asked them to handle Him and thus satisfy themselves that in His crucified body He stood before them. And while they looked on in wonder, doubting whether to trust their own senses or not, He called for food and ate it before them. Mark omits all this, and simply states that he was manifested unto them and reproved them because they did not believe the testimony of those who had seen Him. This necessarily involves His bodily resurrection and appearance.

3, THE DIVINE MISSION OF THE APOSTLES.

John reports an utterance of the Savior which all the others have omitted (vv. 21-23); and in which we find the first part of the commission. Repeating the salutation, "Peace be unto you," Jesus adds, "*As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" All divine authority emanates from the Father, but comes to us through His Son. God was manifest in Him, has spoken through Him, and rules all things by Him. The Father sent the Son to open up the way of life and salvation, and gave Him the Spirit of power and of wisdom without measure. The Son sent the apostles to make known this way of life and salvation to all the world, and endowed them with all needed power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to enable them to do the work to which He had called them. The apostles proclaimed to the world all the truth revealed to them by the Holy Spirit, and then committed the same to a written record that was to hand their testimony concerning Jesus, down through all the ages. This record of life-giving truth they gave in charge to the churches which they had planted, trained

and set in order, solemnly charging them, as Paul charged Timothy, to commit the same things to faithful men who would thus be enabled to teach others also. In this way the truth in all its divine purity and saving power, has been preserved and handed down from age to age; and the work of saving souls has rolled onward and will continue to roll onward until the "little stone" that Daniel saw becomes a great mountain and fills the world.

THE PROMISE AND EARNEST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"*He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.*" This was doubtless in anticipation of that full endowment of the Holy Spirit, which they were to receive after Jesus was exalted by the right hand of God. It was a repetition of the promise made to them before the crucifixion. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you." This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, as Peter expressly declares. "Being therefore by the right of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." I am persuaded however, that this act and declaration of the Savior, which is reported by John only, was more than a promise; and that a measure of the Spirit was here imparted to them as an earnest of that full endowment which they were soon to receive.

5. THE POWER TO FORGIVE AND RETAIN SINS.

"*Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.*" This is not a *priestly* prerogative conferred on them by virtue of which they were authorized to *absolve* men from sin; but simply an *official* authority by which they were to make known to men the means through which, and the conditions on which, God forgives the sins of men. All the saints, the apostles included, are kings and priests unto God in the

same sense, not with the power to forgive sins, but with the privilege of offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. The apostles never claim the power to absolve men from sin, and never pretended to exercise any such power, as some do who claimed to be their successors in office. It is God alone who remits or forgives sins, and this He does through the mediation of His Son. Our only great High Priest. The apostles, however, in setting forth Jesus as the only Savior of sinners, and in showing to the world what characters are saved and what lost, are, in a declarative sense, said to forgive and retain sins. That is in their official character as apostles, they are authorized to declare whose sins are forgiven and whose retained, and to point out the way by which sinners may come to Jesus and be saved. This is nothing more than to preach the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes it. The remainder of the commission throws additional light on this part of the subject; and the history of apostolic preaching, given by Luke in Acts fully exemplifies the whole matter.

6. THE NECESSITY OF THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF THE CHRIST.

As the apostles in common with all the other disciples were not prepared to accept the death of Jesus as a part of the Messianic programme, so even they did not anticipate His resurrection from the dead. And when it was announced to them that He had risen, they did not believe it until they saw Him with their own eyes, and heard Him with their own ears; "for as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead." And even after He had appeared to them, talked to them, showed them His hands and His side and had eaten before them, they were still bewildered in mind and understood neither the Scriptures nor the import of His death and

resurrection. Having convinced them of the reality of His appearance, Jesus proceeds to explain these wonderful events. He reminds them that while He was yet with them, He had plainly told them of all these things which have now come to pass in accordance, not only with His own predictions, but also with Old Testament prophecy.

"Then opened He their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures." How He did this and to what extent they were enlightened at this time, we have no means of knowing. That they were not fully inspired at this time, we know from the question which they so earnestly propounded to the Savior forty days afterward at His last interview with them, and also from the events that occurred on the day of Pentecost. On this occasion, however, their risen Lord doubtless did for them just what they needed for the time being, and no more. He now repeats with emphasis the necessity of His death and resurrection, saying: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day." The Scriptures had foretold a suffering and rising, as well as a reigning Messiah; and had not Jesus died and risen from the dead, He would not have been the Messiah promised in the Old Testament.

There was a necessity, however, lying back of all these prophecies, and calling for that one, great final sacrificial offering which these prophecies foretold. This necessity originated in the existence, tendency, and power of sin. Paul teaches that "apart from shedding of blood there is no remission," and also that "it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Hence the necessity of Christ's death, and hence the prophecies foretelling that death. In the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, in His exaltation and mediatorial reign as Lord of all, and in His final coming as Judge of all, we have the funda-

mental facts of that gospel which is the medium of God's saving power to all who believe.

7. THINGS TO BE PREACHED IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations beginning from Jerusalem."

(1.) Repentance and remission of sins are the things to be preached; the one a duty to be performed, and the other a blessing to be enjoyed. Repentance implies faith in Jesus as the Savior of sinners; and remission of sins implies a change of state which brings into covenant relation with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(2.) These things are preached in the name of Jesus; for all spiritual blessings now come through His name. "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins."

(3.) This message of love and mercy was first to be announced in the city of Jerusalem, and from that as a radiating center go forth to all the nations of the earth.

8. THE APOSTLES AS WITNESSES, AND THE POWER THEY NEED.

"Ye are witnesses of these things." For this, they had been chosen; for this, they had been trained; for this they are now commissioned; and for this, they are soon to be invested with power from on high. Long afterward Peter wrote,—*"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there was borne such a voice to Him by the Majestic Glory, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and this voice we ourselves heard borne out of heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount."*

John the aged, that disciple whom Jesus loved, writes,—
“That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye may have fellowship with us.”

The apostles therefore were witnesses to matters of fact, things that required only good eyes, good ears, and honest hearts in order to the giving of credible testimony. “These things” of which they were to be witnesses include all that Jesus had said, done and suffered in order to save men from sin and death; and all these things the Holy Spirit was to bring to their remembrance when He came upon them in power.

They are not yet prepared, however, to enter on the great work to which they have been called; nor has the time yet come for them to begin. Jesus must remain on earth forty days, show Himself to the disciples time and again, speak of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and thus give them many infallible proofs of His resurrection and divine power. He must return whence He came, enter the most holy place in the heavens, and, in the presence of the hierarchies of heaven, present the offering He has made on earth. This being accepted by the Father, His mediatorial reign will at once begin, and then He will send down the promised power in order that the apostles may enter on that work to which the Master had called them. Hence He said to them,—“And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.” Here Luke’s report of that first interview ends. The next utterance of the Savior, which has been preserved by Mark only, opens to them—

9. THEIR FIELD AND THEIR WORK.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation." How appropriately and forcibly, this comes in after the conclusion of Luke's report! When the power comes, then go, not only through Judea and Samaria but into all the world; and as you go, preach the gospel, not only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but also to the Gentiles—to every creature, every son and daughter of Adam who is capable of understanding and obeying it. Up to this time, they had been restricted in their labors to the land of Palestine and the Jewish people.

The personal ministry of Jesus, as He expressly declares, was to the Jews only; but the ministry of the apostles under this commission is to all mankind. Their field is the inhabited earth; and the subjects of their ministry are all responsible human beings. Their work is to preach the gospel in its truths, its facts, its precepts, its promises, and its threatenings; the gospel in its relation to the sinner and the saint, to time and eternity; for in these respects it is the medium of God's converting and sanctifying power.

10. THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Faith and baptism are here presented as the divinely appointed means by which men and women are brought personally into the *enjoyment* of the blessings found in the kingdom of God and which have been *procured* by the death and mediation of Jesus. Among these blessings we find all the helps that are needed to enable us to hold out faithful unto death, and thus attain eternal life. The terms here used, however, must be taken in their broad, heart-searching, scriptural import; and not in any narrow, sectarian, or dogmatic sense. The belief or faith here required embraces the whole gospel in all its life-begetting

power, generating a living repentance toward God, in the strength of which a man is enabled to say from the depth of his heart, "I will arise and go to my Father." The baptism here enjoined involves a heartfelt renunciation of the past sinful life, a loving recognition of the supreme Lordship of Jesus, and a fixed determination to live a new life. All who thus come to Christ have the assurance of a full and free salvation from all past sins, of the abiding comfort of the Holy Spirit, and through a faithful continuance in well doing of the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior.

But those who reject the gospel are left in a state of condemnation in which they are without hope and without God. All who have not joyfully received Jesus as their Savior are already lost; for in rejecting the gospel, they resist the Holy Spirit, and put away from themselves the divinely ordained means of their own salvation. As long as they persist in this rejection of the gospel, so long they remain in a lost condition; and should they die in this state of unbelief, they will inevitably be condemned at the revelation of Jesus, and "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power." The gospel is therefore a twofold power—the power of God unto the salvation of the believer, and the power of God unto the condemnation of the unbeliever.

II. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE TESTIMONY.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe," etc. The signs mentioned did follow to the end of the apostolic age, when they ceased by the limitation here implied, but elsewhere expressed. Paul expressly declares that signs shall cease, prophecies shall fail, and tongues shall pass away; but the gospel in all its power is to continue to the final coming of the Lord to judge the world. The very object for which signs were given points to their cessation.

They were given to confirm the testimony of the apostles and other inspired teachers, and as long as there was any additional truth to be revealed, or any act of worship to be established or regulated, so long the signs continued. But when all the truth had been revealed, and committed to a written record; and a sufficient number of churches had been established and set in order, to exemplify the power of the gospel in converting sinners and edifying saints; then there was no longer any need for signs, and they ceased by limitation of design. As there is now no additional truth to be revealed, nor any new order of things to be introduced until the Lord returns in glory, there is neither need nor place for signs. Indeed in the present state of affairs, their only effect would be to turn the mind away from the truth as it is in Jesus, and to minister to the gratification of an idle curiosity.

These three reports by Mark and Luke and John of what Jesus said to His disciples on that hallowed first day eve, when taken together in proper order, give us the whole commission in detail. And while they had abbreviated the Savior's discourse by omitting many things that He said to them on that occasion, still every word here attributed to Him was spoken by Him; and thus the work He had done, and the work they were to do, are both laid before them in their true relation to each other.

Eight days afterward, or on the next first day, when the disciples were assembled again and Thomas was with them, Jesus appeared to them again, and having saluted them all, addressed Thomas personally, and granted to him the test that he had demanded. Thomas at once exclaimed, "My Lord and my God." Afterward He appeared unto seven of the apostles at the sea of Tiberias, of which meeting, John says, "This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that He was risen from the dead"—that is to the disciples as-

sembled, for this is His seventh appearance. It was probably at this time that He designated the place at which they were to meet Him in Galilee, although the meeting itself had been appointed by Him before He was crucified. And it was doubtless at the meeting in Galilee that "He appeared to above five hundred brethren at once," for there is no other appearance mentioned at which so many could have been present. We are now prepared to consider

MATTHEW'S REPORT. (Chapter 28:16-20.)

"But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo; I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Margin, "Or the consummation of the age.")

This is a comprehensive generalization of the whole matter, setting forth in few words the supreme Lordship of Jesus, the world-wide ministry of the apostles in its relation both to sinner and to saint, and the continued presence of the Savior in power with them during their personal ministry, and through their testimony to the end of the Christian age. In a word, it is a grand summary of the great commission in the words of Jesus himself. Let us carefully and reverently study these grand items in the order in which they are here presented by the Lord of all.

I. THE SUPREME LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

"*All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.*" This august preamble looks forward to the exaltation of Jesus, and the consequent endowment of the

apostles with all the gifts and powers needed by them in their great work. It invests the commission itself with pre-eminent importance, and throws the arm of Almighty power around the Church.

2. THE WORK OF THE APOSTLES IN RELATION BOTH TO THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH.

(1.) To the World. "*Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*" Disciples can be made only by means of teaching. God draws men to His Son by teaching them "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God." Hence Jesus says, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." There is a teaching that enlists, or makes disciples; and there is a teaching that trains those already enlisted. The teaching of the 19th verse is of the first character; that of the 20th verse, of the second character. In the first, the apostles were recruiting officers, enlisting soldiers for the Lord's army; in the second, they were drill masters, training these new recruits for the great battle of life. In enlisting or making disciples, it was necessary for them to preach the gospel in all its fulness and finality, and by this means bring God's converting power to bear on the hearts and consciences of all who heard them. The baptism enjoined involves a change of relationship; and implies a cordial faith in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, a genuine repentance toward God in turning from sin to the Lord; and a heartfelt submission to the authority of Jesus as Lord of all. This is the last act in the process of becoming a disciple of Jesus.

(2.) To the Church. "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.*" In this part of the work we have the full cultivation and development of the Christian life in order to the attainment and enjoyment of

endless happiness hereafter. Thus in the first part of the work laid on the apostles, we find the conversion of sinners; in the second part, the edification of the saints. The first brings us into a state of grace or favor here; the second will introduce us into a state of glory hereafter. Salvation, in the sense of the remission of sins, is connected with the first; salvation in the sense of eternal life, is connected with the second.

3. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF JESUS.

“And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—*“the consummation of the age.”* As their ministry began with the beginning of the gospel age, the end must of course be the end of the same age. Through the Holy Spirit, which has been the representative of Jesus on earth since the day of Pentecost, the Savior was with the apostles in power to work miracles, to speak with tongues, to recall the past, and to forecast the future, to the end of their natural life. And as their ministry is still carried on in their word or testimony through which men believe on Jesus it follows that through the agency of the same representative which has never been withdrawn, He is yet with them in the converting and sanctifying power of the truth.

Having all these faithful reports now before us, let us once more look over the entire ground covered by them, and reduce the whole matter to one grand summary.

1. *The authority by which the apostles were commissioned.*

This was nothing less than the supreme authority of the Father delegated to the Son; equivalent to all authority, legislative, executive and judicial, both in heaven and on earth; equivalent, in a word, to universal dominion.

2. *The gifts of the Holy Spirit with which they were to be endowed.*

Remembrance of all that Jesus had said to them; guidance into a knowledge of all the truth; knowledge of things

to come; and power to speak with tongues and to work miracles in conformation of their testimony.

3. *The subject matter of their preaching.*

The Gospel of Christ;—The divine nature and official character of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God; His sacrificial death followed by His burial and resurrection, in which He was the “Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world;” His exaltation to supreme Lordship at the right hand of the Father; and His final coming in power and glory to the judgment of the world.

4. *The conditions connected with the personal enjoyment of salvation..*

To the Alien: Faith in Jesus, embracing Him in all the fulness of His divinely revealed and divinely attested character; repentance towards God, involving a turning away from the practice of sin to a life of righteousness; and baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which completes the process by changing the state of the subject and bringing him into the personal enjoyment of all the blessings found in the Church of God.

To the Christian: A faithful observance of all things commanded by the Savior; a diligent and prayerful cultivation of the heart; and a firm adherence to the truth throughout life. With such a life we will find solid comfort in the hour of death; and finally have the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

5. *The condemnation of unbelievers.*

All men being in a state of condemnation on account of their own sins, and the gospel being the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, it follows necessarily and incontestibly that all who finally reject the gospel are lost, and that beyond remedy.

6. *The continued presence of Jesus.*

Not in person, but in power; not with the apostles through their natural life only, but also with their testimony through all time; and also with all His faithful disciples at all times and every where. He dwells in our hearts through faith and in the comfort and the help of the Holy Spirit, and will never leave or forsake us. So long as we cling to Him, so long we are safe beyond the reach of all harm.

Such is the great commission given to the apostles by their risen Lord who was soon to be enthroned at the right hand of the Father, in which He plainly lays down the *Rule of Conversion*, and solemnly enacts the *Law of Pardon*, for all coming time. The circumstances under which it was given, the humble character and lowly position of the men to whom it was given, and the gracious and glorious objects for which it was given,—all combine to invest these words of the Savior with peculiar importance.

It is a great *Amnesty Proclamation* from the Lord of heaven and earth to a world in rebellion and ruin. It offers a free and full pardon for all past offenses; promises grace to help in every time of need through life, and solid comfort in the hour of death; and provides an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading for every son and daughter of Adam's sinning and dying race, who will trust in Jesus, take refuge in His kingdom, and observe His commandments.

The subsequent ministrations of the Holy Spirit, the life-long labors and continued testimony of the apostles, the mission of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the personal example and influence of every disciple of Jesus, all taken together constitute but the development of this world-wide and age-lasting commission. The judgment day alone will fully unfold its mighty results; and in the light of eternity alone will it be fully understood and adequately appreciated.

Many sermons have been preached from it, many volumes have been written on it, many thoughtful minds and devout hearts have pondered over it; and yet the theme has not been exhausted; nor indeed can it be while sin remains to curse the earth and defy the power of God. Springing from the fountain of Eternal Love, it pours its cleansing tide throughout this lost and ruined world; and ever widening and deepening as it flows, it rolls onward to the deep ocean of eternity, bearing upon its bosom the increasing myriads who drink of its healing waters, and wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. And when the Lord who gave it shall return to reap the harvest of the Gospel age and "take His ransomed home," then its grand and glorious results will be the theme of saintly song and angelic chorus throughout the ages of eternity.

Brethren in Christ, in this soul-thrilling commission the gospel of Christ is committed to us as the richest heritage on earth. It is the divine legacy left us by our ascending Lord and Savior who lives and reigns at the right hand of the Father. Let us take it up, press it to our hearts, drink deep of its spirit, and then bear its message of love and mercy to the ends of the earth, that all men may rejoice in the light and glory thereof.

"Onward, onward, men of heaven!
Bear the gospel banner high;
Rest not till its light is given—
Star of every pagan sky!
Send it where the pilgrim—stranger
Faints beneath the torrid ray;
Bid the hardy forest-ranger
Hail it ere he fades away.

"Where the artic ocean thunders,
Where the tropics fiercely glow,
Broadly spread its page of wonders,
Brightly bid its radiance flow.

India marks its luster stealing;
Shivering Greenland loves its rays;
Afric', mid her desert kneeling,
Lifts the untaught strain of praise.

“Rude in speech or wild in feature,
Dark in spirit though they be,
Show that light to every creature—
Prince or vassal, bond or free.
Lo! they haste from every nation;
Host on host the ranks supply.
Onward! Christ is your salvation,
And your death is victory.”

Fifth Sermon.

CONVERSION OF THE THREE THOUSAND.

“*Thy then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.*” Acts 2:41. Rev. Ver.

The “Acts of Apostles” is pre-eminently *the Book of Conversions*. It is an *Inspired Commentary* on the *Commission*. It is a complete exemplification of the *Rule of Conversion*. It is the practical application of the *Law of Pardon* by the apostles themselves. It is a full development of the *Plan of Salvation* so far as the *Alien* is concerned. It shows how men were delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God’s beloved Son. Isaiah said, “For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;” and here we find the fulfillment of this prophecy.

In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus presents the subject of conversion under the *figure* of a new birth, or being born again. In “Acts,” Luke presents the subject of the new birth in the *facts* of conversion. The *figure* has been made a wonder and a mystery to the religious world for ages; the *facts* even a child may understand. Being born again is simply conversion in a *figure*; while conversion is being born again in *fact*. In other words, he that has been born again, has been converted, and he that has been converted, has been born again. A regenerate unconverted man, or a converted unregenerate man, is a character that is wholly unknown to the Scriptures; and the conception of such a character is about the greatest absurdity that a metaphysical and unscriptural theology has ever gotten up. In New Testament terminology, being born again, and being converted, are equiva-

lents that involve the same thorough change—a change of heart, of life, and of relationship.

It is a fact worthy of profound consideration, that there is more teaching in the *Acts of Apostles* on the subject of conversion than in all the rest of the New Testament. The subject is presented from every practical and profitable standpoint; and is exemplified in the actual conversion of thousands of men and women of every rank and condition. This history shows how the gospel meets the wants of the devout Jew, the enlightened Gentile, and the benighted Pagan. It shows how the vilest characters were lifted up by the power of the gospel; and washed, justified, and sanctified “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the Spirit of our God.”

With this narrative of Luke in our hands, we can go up to Jerusalem, down to Samaria, or along the way that leads to Gaza; we may visit the city of Philippi, or take our journey to Corinth; and at all these places by the ear of faith we may hear the apostles and others preach the gospel of our salvation “by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven;” and then by the eye of faith, we may see them induct men and women, body, soul and spirit, into the Church or Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this faithful record, the Holy Spirit still testifies of Jesus, still convicts the world of sin of righteousness, and of judgment, and still shows the sinner how he may come to Jesus and be saved. In this book, the apostles though dead yet speak—speak with the voice of inspiration, preaching repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus to all who will hear or read their word.

In our investigation, we have now come to the History of Conversions and will begin with the *Three Thousand Jews* who turned to the Lord on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Jesus. There are facts of peculiar importance connected with this case of conversion. On this

occasion the apostles were fully clothed with the promised power from high; and on this day they began to preach salvation in the name of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, crucified, buried, risen, and exalted by the right hand of the Father. Up to this time the gospel had been preached only in *promise*; but from this time onward, it has been preached in *fact*, and also as God's last message of love and mercy to the human family.

This is also the first case of conversion under the ministry of the apostles after they received their commission from the risen Savior. In this respect it is pre-eminently the model case of conversion, and should be studied profoundly and prayerfully by all who are inquiring after the way of life, as well as by those who desire to lead others out of darkness into the light of this heavenward way. Most especially should the *Acts of Apostles* be the handbook of the evangelist whose special work it is to labor for the conversion of alien sinners. Far be it from me to disparage or underrate any portion of revealed truth either in the Old Testament, or in the New; for every book in the Bible, and every part of each book is all-important in its own place, and profitable for the purpose for which it was given. Still it is not true that every chapter in the Bible, or even every book, was intended to teach sinners how to come to God under the mediatorial reign of Christ; and this is the subject which we are now investigating.

Excepting the case of Saul which was in some respects peculiar, two cases of conversion, this of the Jews on the day of Pentecost, and that of the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, are more fully reported and minutely detailed than any others found in the entire history. This fact gives to each of these cases a special interest. The one was the beginning of the great work of conversion among the Jews; the other of the same work among the Gentiles. The history of the first we find in the second chapter of

Acts which we will now examine closely and carefully.

I. THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

“And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts. 2:1-4.

This was unquestionably the fulfilment of that “promise of the Father” for which the apostles were required to wait in the city of Jerusalem. Acts 1:5. “For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.” This is that baptism in the Holy Spirit which John foretold as characteristic of the reign of the approaching Messiah. When the Holy Spirit thus came on the apostles, they received all the power they needed in order to become witnesses unto Christ, not only in Judea and Samaria, but also to the ends of the earth. By the gift of tongues they were enabled to announce the glad tidings of life and salvation to the whole creation as the Lord had commanded them.

Especial attention is called to the fact that when this wonderful event occurred, the unconverted multitude had not yet assembled, and were not therefore, the recipients of this “promise of the Father,” nor of any of the miraculous gifts then and there bestowed on the disciples of Jesus. Some able and devout students of the Holy Scriptures think that this effusion of the Holy Spirit was confined strictly to the apostles. I am willing, however, to give the language of Luke the widest possible construction, and then it will include only the one hundred and twenty disciples who are mentioned in the preceding chapter, as par-

ticipants in the gifts at this time bestowed. The main objects of this event were two: first, to demonstrate the exaltation of Jesus; and second, to fully prepare the apostles, and those who were to be co-laborers and co-witnesses with them, for the great and arduous work on which they were at once to enter.

It is too plain to be denied that on this occasion the Holy Spirit came on those only who were already the disciples of Jesus; and this too in accordance with the special promise made to them before He was put to death, and repeated after He arose from the dead. All therefore who are looking for such a miraculous manifestation of the Holy Spirit as this in order to their own conversion will be sadly disappointed, or wofully deceived. Not even the children of God are all promised such extraordinary gifts as were conferred on these waiting disciples. An event in some respects identical with this, occurred at the house of Cornelius; yet the Church has had but one Pentecost, and will never have another.

The Holy Spirit at this time entered on a new mission as the *Advocate* of Jesus, the *Monitor* of the apostles, the *Guest* of the Church, and the *Reprover* of sinners. This mission, this work, the Holy Spirit has never abandoned or intermitted, from that day to this; nor will the Holy Spirit ever abandon this work until it is completed, and Christ shall come in power and glory to raise the dead and judge the world.

II. THE ASSEMBLING OF THE MULTITUDE, AND THEIR UTTER ASTONISHMENT.

“Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. And they were all amazed

and marvelled saying, "Behold are not all these who speak Galileans? And how hear we, every man in his own language, wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretians and Arabians, we do hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God." And they were all amazed and were perplexed, saying one to another, "What meaneth this?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine." Acts 2: 5-13.

Pentecost was one of their three great annual feasts; and thousands of Jews, not only from the remote parts of Judea, but also from the distant countries into which they had wandered off, had come up to the feast of the Passover, had remained until the feast of the Pentecost, and were thus for the time being sojourning in Jerusalem. The city was thus crowded with foreign Jews representing the various nationalities of earth, together with Jews from all parts of the land of Palestine. What an immense throng would all these make, when added to the population of the city itself! When that sound which came from heaven was heard throughout the city, *then* the multitude came together; and when they reached the place where the apostles were, they were utterly astounded by what they saw and heard. Here were uneducated Galileans, speaking fluently in every tongue wherein the men of these various nations had been born. In their amazement and doubt, they said one to another, "What meaneth this?" Others, doubtless Jews of Jerusalem, said in derision and mockery, "they are filled with new wine."

All of that vast assembly are up to this time in utter ignorance of the meaning and design of the wonderful things which they saw and heard, and are yet uncon-

verted. They are excited, amazed, confounded; their minds are fixed intently on what they saw and heard, but not a ray of light has yet been thrown upon their understanding, nor has any purifying power been brought to bear on their hearts. The Holy Spirit is there; the Church, the Body of Christ, is there; the apostles, clothed with power from on high, are there; and a wonderful miracle is presented to their eyes and ears; still *not one soul has yet been converted*. How can we account for this fact? Only by considering another fact which is that God's converting power has not yet been brought to bear on their hearts.

A miracle in and of itself is not, and has never been, the medium of God's converting power. Miracles arrest attention, confirm testimony, and indicate the authority of God's special messengers; but they exert no enlightening or purifying power on the mind until they are explained so that they can be understood and appreciated. There is something wanting, something yet to be brought to bear upon them in order to their conversion. What is it? Evidently it is that *life-begetting word* which is the *seed* of the kingdom, that *gospel of Christ* which is the *power of God* unto salvation to every one that believes. In a word, it is the *instrument or medium* of conversion that is yet needed in this case. And now, Peter standing up with the eleven, all armed with "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of truth," proceeds to bring this power to bear on their understanding, affections and conscience and will, the result of which the sequel will show.

III. THE DISCOURSE OF PETER.

The time had now come, not only the day, but the very hour, when repentance and remission of sins should be preached to men of every nation in the name of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. The preachers are also in the right place; for their testimony must be delivered

first in the city of Jerusalem where Jesus was rejected and crucified, and then go forth to the uttermost part of the earth. Jesus having been exalted, the promised power having come, the multitude having assembled, Peter who had been chosen by the Savior himself to make the first proclamation in His name, stood forth with the eleven, and addressed the wondering and inquiring multitude, speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance.

(I.) HE REPLIES TO THE CHARGE OF BEING DRUNK.

“But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day.”
(vs. 14-15.)

The third hour of the day according to the Jewish division of time corresponds to nine in the forenoon with us. This was the hour of the morning sacrifice, before which it was not customary for the Jews to drink wine. As these disciples of Jesus were all devout Jews, a simple allusion to their custom in connection with the hour of the day was a sufficient refutation of the charge that they were filled with wine.

The charge, however, is absurd in itself. The question of the multitude was this:—“How hear we every man in our own language, wherein we were born?” The wonderful fact implied in this question is the matter to be accounted for. Now when a man is drunk, however much he may be inclined to talk, we know that he cannot use his own mother tongue well, to say nothing of thirteen or fourteen different tongues that he never heard. Of all the conjectures which they could have made, no other could have been so preposterous as this. That which thickens, and doubles up, and paralyzes the only tongue which a

man has, assigned as the cause that enables him to speak fluently in thirteen or fourteen other tongues! What a striking illustration of the unreasonableness of unbelief!

(2.) HE EXPLAINS THE WONDERFUL EVENT, THE EFFECTS OF WHICH HAD SO AMAZED THE MULTITUDE.

“But this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel;

And it shall be in the last days, saith God,
I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh:
And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
And your young men shall see visions,
And your old men shall dream dreams:

Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days

Will I pour forth my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.
And I will shew wonders in heaven above,
And signs on the earth beneath;
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke:
The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the day of the Lord come,
That great and notable day:

And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (vs. 16-21)

This event was the fulfillment, not only of the prophecy of Joel, but also of the promise of the Holy Spirit, as given both by John and Jesus. This is expressly stated by Peter in the latter part of his discourse. All that Jesus said of the coming and work of the Holy Spirit, both before His death and after His resurrection, is included in this promise, and was fulfilled, or began to be fulfilled, at this time. According to the prophecy of Joel, the Spirit was poured out on “all flesh,” not on every man, woman, and child in the world, for this has never been done at any time or

place, but on all kinds of flesh, on women as well as men, on the young as well as the old, on the Gentiles as well as the Jews. There were no Gentiles, it is true, in this company of disciples at Jerusalem but afterwards at the house of Cornelius the Spirit fell on the Gentiles who heard the word, as it here fell on the Jewish believers at the beginning: and Peter identifies the two events as the baptism in the Holy Spirit promised by the Lord. At Jerusalem it was on the servants and handmaidens of the Lord that the Holy Spirit was poured out; and this fact explains and properly limits the phrase, "*All Flesh.*"

(3.) HE PROCLAIMS THE RESURRECTION AND EXALTATION OF JESUS.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. For David saith concerning Him,

I beheld the Lord always before my face;

For He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope;

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades,

Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption.

Thou madest known unto me the ways of life;

Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance.

Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch

David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. For David ascended not into the heavens; but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom ye crucified." (vs. 22-36.)

The resurrection of Jesus being *The Fact of facts*, that on which the whole matter hinges, Peter devotes the greater part of this discourse to the proof of this fact. In the first place, he appeals to that prophecy which they all acknowledged as of divine authority. He quotes from one of the Messianic psalms of David, and shows conclusively that David could not have spoken concerning himself; for his body had long been in the grave, and his sepulcher was still with them. But as a prophet, he had foreseen the day of the Messiah, and had foretold His resurrection from the dead.

In the second place, he appeals to the personal knowledge of all the disciples of Jesus, then and there present, and declared that they were witnesses of His resurrection. This testimony the multitude could not reject without charging them all with wilful and known falsehood. Such a charge as this could not be made against them with

any show of reason; for they had everything to lose and nothing to gain by testifying to the resurrection of Jesus, if it were not true; and with reference to this alleged fact they could not have been deceived. The multitude also knew that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb in which it had been laid. Hence, against this testimony of the apostles, they could not say a word.

In the third place he points to what they saw and heard as a demonstration of the resurrection of Jesus that could not be denied. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, and had not been exalted by the right hand of God, whence that sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind by which you were drawn to this place? Whence these fire-like tongues which you see distributed among us? Whence this power by which we Galileans are enabled to speak to you in your own tongues, wherein ye were born? These facts cannot be explained, if Jesus did not rise from the dead. Never in all the history of the world has any event been more fully sustained by evidence addressed both to the understanding and the conscience, than the resurrection of Jesus.

Let us now look over this wonderful discourse again, and notice some facts of the highest importance with reference to the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the unconverted. When Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples, He said, "And, he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." This work the Holy Spirit did on this occasion, not in some secret, abstract, and mysterious way, but through the words spoken by the apostles; and this work the Holy Spirit continues to do through the instrumentality of the truth, wherever

the gospel is preached, or the New testament is read.

The Spirit convicted the multitude of their own sin when he said with reference to Jesus, HIM, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, *ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay.*” And again, “God hath made Him Lord and Christ, this same Jesus whom ye crucified.” It was these sword-thrusts of the spirit,—“piercing even to the dividing of soul and Spirit, of both joints and marrow”—that carried conviction to their hearts.

The Spirit vindicated the righteousness of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of sinners, by establishing the facts of His resurrection and His exaltation; the one manifesting His power over death and the grave, the other proclaiming His universal authority and dominion.

The Spirit warned the ungodly of that judgment which is to come, in applying to Jesus the prophecy of David in which the Father is represented as addressing the Son with awful majesty, and saying to Him, “Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool.” Jesus is to reign until all His foes are subdued. Even death itself is to be destroyed by His mighty power. The time is coming when “every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is the Christ, to the glory of God the Father.” O, sinner better bow and confess now, willingly, joyfully, lovingly, while you can obtain an interest in the death and mediation of the Savior, than wait till this homage is forced from you by the coming of Jesus in judgment, for then the confession will avail you not. Better obey now, and suffer too if need be, than resist until the Lord comes, and then be placed under His feet without the hope of rescue.

What a grand moral spectacle is here presented by the apostle Peter! Only seven weeks before, he had de-

nied his Master with an oath, saying, "I know Him not." When the women returned from the tomb, and reported that they had seen Jesus alive, he believed them not. And when he had entered into the open sepulcher, and had seen the linen clothes lying there in which the body of Jesus had been wrapped, "he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass." Even after he had seen the risen Lord with his own eyes on three occasions at least, he seems to have become impatient at the Savior's delay, and said, "I go a fishing," which was equivalent to saying, "I am tired of waiting, and will return to my former vocation." Six others went with him including the sons of Zebedee, and Nathanael. But now he stands unabashed before that vast multitude, charging them with crucifying the Christ, testifies that He has risen from the dead, and proclaims Him as Lord of all. Never has mortal man presented to the world a more sublime spectacle than Peter presents on that occasion. He quailed not in the presence of those who had crucified his Lord and Master. He assailed the enemy in his very citadel, and came off a victor with three thousand trophies. His undaunted courage could have been born only of the conscious knowledge of the truth uttered. Had that multitude not known that Joseph's tomb was open and the body of Jesus gone, they would have torn him to pieces. Had he not known beyond all possibility of doubt or deception that Jesus had been raised from the dead and exalted by the right hand of God, it would have been a mental and moral impossibility for him to have stood before that audience and made the charge and the announcement which he did make. The very fact that such testimony was delivered under such circumstances, is one of the strongest confirmations of its truth.

Let us now notice the conclusion of this grand sermon. Having vindicated the character of Jesus, proved

His resurrection from the dead, and proclaimed His exaltation by the right hand of God, the apostle concludes his great argument by setting forth the Supreme Lordship, of that same Jesus whom they had rejected and crucified. In this final declaration, the Holy Spirit summed up the whole matter, again convicted them of their own sin in crucifying the Lord of Glory, asserted His complete vindication by the Almighty Father, and thundered in their ears the judgment to come. Like the lightning's flash it ran through that large assembly, and carried conviction to thousands of hearts.

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE ON THE MULTITUDE.

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" (v. 37.)

This illustrates both the power and the instrumentality of the truth. It was "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God," that pierced their hearts with the deepest conviction of their own sin, and drew from them the earnest, anguished cry, "What shall we do?" It was not instantaneously and directly by the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the extraordinary effects thereof, that God's converting power was brought to bear on their minds and hearts; but through the Word of Truth, revealed by the Spirit, spoken by the apostle, and confirmed by the signs which they saw and heard. The history of this case of conversion, therefore, affords no ground whatever for the position that men are converted in a moment by an abstract and irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit; but on the contrary, it shows conclusively that the most wonderful manifestations of the Holy Spirit, ever made on earth, did not of themselves, separate and apart from the life-begetting seed, convert a single soul. Without the discourse of the apostle, explaining these wonderful manifes-

tations of the Holy Spirit, and presenting Christ Jesus and Him crucified as the sinner's only hope, there neither would nor could have been a single case of conversion according to the Divine arrangement, for it has pleased God in accordance with His own wisdom, and contrary to human wisdom, to save them that believe through what Grecian philosophers called "the foolishness of preaching," or "rather the thing preached," which in their estimation was foolishness, (See I. Cor. 1: 20-25.) It was not until they heard that God had made Jesus whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ, that they were cut in their hearts, and led to sue for mercy.

V. THE ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION.

"And Peter said unto them, repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (v. 38.)

This answer takes them at their word, grants that they were sincere, and implies that they really and truly believed in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The statement that they were pierced in their hearts, implies the same thing; for men are not cut to the heart by that which they do not believe. Indeed, their question, "What shall we do?" was both a confession of their guilt, and an avowal of their faith in Jesus as their own long-promised Messiah. It also manifested their willingness to do whatever might be required of them. As they already believed with all the heart, two things which were enjoined upon them:—

(1.) *To Repent*, which involves a heart-felt and godly sorrow for past sins, and a determination to lead a new life; and,

(2.) *To be baptized in the name of Jesus*, which involves an unreserved surrender of heart and life to the

authority and control of Jesus as Lord of all.

On a heart-felt obedience to these two requirements, two great comprehensive and gracious blessings are promised:—

(1.) *The remission of sins*, embracing pardon for the past, peace for the present, and hope for the future—the cleansing away of guilt through the blood of Jesus, and the removal of the penalty through the love of God; and,

(2.) *The gift of the Holy Spirit*, that is the Holy Spirit himself given as their *Comforter and Helper*, to dwell in them and abide with them throughout the journey of life.

As a matter of encouragement, and in conformation of all that he had previously said, Peter adds,—

“For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him.” And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” (Vs. 39-40.) “To you”—the Jews then living; “and to your children”—their posterity to the end of the Gospel age; “and to all that are afar off”—the Gentiles. The full import of this promise, Peter himself did not at this time fully understand; but years afterwards at the house of Cornelius, he was enabled to grasp its full meaning. As his audience at this time was composed wholly of Jews, it was only necessary that he should know what and how to preach to them; but when the time came for the gospel to be preached to the Gentiles, then Peter received all the additional light that he needed.

Not only did he call their attention to the great promise of salvation through the Messiah, which promise was to men of every nation; but with many other words he testified to the claims of Jesus, and exhorted them to save themselves by turning away from that crooked generation,

and laying hold of the means provided for their escape. In this exhortation, their own personal responsibility is brought plainly to view, and earnestly pressed upon them. God has removed the obstacles, provided the means, and opened up the way; and now they, by separating themselves from that crooked generation and accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior, will be brought into the enjoyment of the blessings so abundantly found in the Church of God.

VI. THE RESULT OF THE DISCOURSE.

“They than that received His word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostle’s teaching and fellowship; in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Vs. 41, 42.)

The word which they are here said to have received, is doubtless the word which was spoken in answer to their question, “What shall we do?” They had already received the word previously spoken. It was the word of truth spoken by Peter that had pierced their hearts, and caused them to ask what they should do. And when they were told what the Lord had appointed for them to do, and were exhorted to save themselves from that perverse generation, they received this additional word also. They received it gladly, rejoicing in heart that the Lord whom they had rejected and crucified, was still so merciful although invested with all authority in heaven and on earth; and they at once manifested their hearty faith and genuine repentance by their obedience in baptism. This baptism was “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” It was by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. In it they “put on Christ.” By it they were publicly, formally, and constitutionally inducted into the kingdom, and invested with all its rights, privi-

leges and immunities. They were assured of the remission of sins, and recognized as children of God, heirs of heaven and life eternal. Such is the history of this case of conversion. Let us briefly sum up its agencies, its means, and its conditions of enjoyment. (1.) ITS AGENCIES.

The Holy Spirit filling the little band of disciples then and there organized as "the Church which is the body of Christ," guiding the apostles into "all the truth," clothing them with superhuman power, and speaking through them the words of life and light—was in this, as in all other cases, the chief agent of conversion.

(2.) *The Apostles*, speaking as the Spirit gave them utterance, testifying of Christ, pleading with sinners, were the leading human agents in this case of conversion, as they are still and ever will be; for though dead they yet speak "the word of the Lord" which they made known on the day of Pentecost. As they were agents then through their spoken testimony, so they are agents now through their written testimony. Their word lives and abides in all of its vitalizing power, and can never be destroyed.

(3.) *The Other Disciples*, filled with the Spirit, manifesting their joy, and ready to bear witness with the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus,—these also had an important agency in the conversion of this sinful multitude, as Christians ever have, wherever they may live and under whatever circumstances they may be placed. Oh! that the Lord's people at this day and in this country could fully realize the responsibility that is resting on them with reference to the conversion of sinners!

(4.) *The sinners themselves*, guilt-stricken and inquiring, had also an agency in this work which so vitally concerned themselves. It was theirs to attend to the things spoken by the apostles, to hearken to the divine counsel, to learn of Jesus and to receive the truth that

they might be made alive. They had the divinely-given power to do this; and they also had the power to reject the gospel and die.

II. ITS MEANS, OR INSTRUMENT. *The truth preached by the apostles*, presenting Jesus in His divine character, mission, sufferings, triumphs and intercession, as the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of sinners, was the divinely chosen instrument or medium of conversion in this as in all other cases. The same truth, retaining all its original power, is still the medium of God's converting power.

III. THE CONDITIONS OF ENJOYMENT. Men *heard*, heard with earnest attention, listened with deep interest, with a willingness to be instructed and a desire to be blessed; they *believed* with all the heart, *acknowledged* their own guilt, *repented* of their sins, *confessed* Jesus as their Savior, and *were baptized* in His name, that is by His authority. Thus they entered through these divinely-appointed conditions into the enjoyment of the blessing graciously provided for them through the death and mediation of Jesus.

Here the history of their conversion ends, and that of their Christian life begins. Their conversion brought them into Christ, into the Church which is the body of Christ, into the enjoyment of all the blessings and the use of all the means which God has placed in the kingdom of grace. They were then and thus saved from all their past sins which were blotted out to be remembered against them no more. Saved from the past and adopted into the family of God, they must now without ceasing attend to the teaching of the apostles, to their joint participation in every good work, to the breaking of the commemorative loaf, and to the prayers and other devotional exercises in which they will offer their heart-tribute to the Lord, and engage in the cultivation, development, and enjoyment of

their Christian character. They must henceforth live, not to themselves, nor to the world, but to Him who died for them and rose again. As the children of God, "by a patient continuance in well doing," they must continue to "seek for glory, honor, and immortality," that they may finally enter into the full enjoyment of eternal life—that salvation which lies beyond the grave and is eternal in the heavens.

In conclusion, how beautifully and strikingly does this case of conversion accord with, and exemplify the *Rule of Conversion*, or *Law of Pardon*, as authoritatively laid down by the Savior in the *Great Commission*! Every injunction of the risen Lord is here exactly fulfilled. As the gospel was preached at the beginning in the city of Jerusalem; so it was to be preached among all the nations. As men were converted under the preaching of the apostles; so they are to be converted till the Lord comes to close this age of mercy.

The apostles, filled with, and guided by the Holy Spirit, preached Christ in His life, death, burial, resurrection, exaltation, and mediatorial reign, as the Son of God and the only Savior of sinners. Men heard, believed, were cut in their hearts, and inquired what they should do. They were commanded to repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and were assured that they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

All who gladly received this word were baptized, and in their own souls experienced the fulness of that joy which flows from the assurance of pardon and the hope of eternal life. Then they continued in the path of duty, serving the Lord with singleness of heart, and devoting their lives to Him who died to redeem them from sin and death.

Thus the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus as the Messiah, began in the city

of Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after He arose from the dead. Thus it was embodied in the Living Oracles by the pen of inspiration. Thus it has come down to us; and thus it will go onward from conquest to conquest, till "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It devolves on the whole Church to bend all her energies to the accomplishment of this great final result.

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand—
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand—
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain."

"Shall we whose souls are lighted
By wisdom from on high—
Shall we to man benighted,
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! O Salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name."

"Waft, waft, you winds His story,
And you, you waters roll,
Till like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

Sixth Sermon.

THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.

"Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18.

A peculiar interest is attached to this case of conversion from the fact that it was the opening of the "door of faith" by divine authority to the Gentiles of that and all succeeding generations. Not only were the Gentiles here admitted to all the privileges of the gospel, but they were brought in directly from their Gentile state without circumcision or the observance of any other Jewish rite. For some seven or eight years, the gospel had been preached to Jews and Jewish proselytes in Judea and Samaria, and many of them had become obedient to the faith; but they had not yet learned that the "middle wall of partition," heretofore separating them from the Gentiles, had been broken down by the death of Jesus, and forever taken away.

They must have looked forward, it is true, to the conversion of the Gentiles at some period in the history of the Church; for the prophecies with reference to the coming Messiah, were too plain to be mistaken. Isaiah had said expressly, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." While the disciples, especially the apostles, must have understood such prophecies as referring to the conversion of the Gentiles, and their reception among the covenant people of God, they nevertheless expected that they would first become Jews and then Christians; that they would first submit to the law of Moses, then obey the gospel of Christ.

In consequence of their Jewish training, Jewish expectations, and Jewish prejudices, the disciples of Christ could not, previous to this time, think of the blessings of

the gospel, as flowing out to the nations through any other channel than that of the Mosaic law with all its cumbrous ceremonies. Even the apostles themselves were not fully enlightened on this point until God himself put forth His hand, opened the door and placed the Gentiles on terms of equality with the Jews in the reception and enjoyment of all gospel blessings.

This case of conversion is therefore the beginning of a New Era in the preaching of the gospel, and in the history of the Church. Its history is detailed at some length in the tenth chapter of Acts.; briefly rehearsed in the eleventh chapter, vs. 1-18; and still more briefly summed up in the fifteenth chapter, vs. 7-11. In its investigation we will pass in review all the facts and incidents connected with it; and will endeavor by a correct classification of these facts and incidents to bring the whole matter within the ordinary limits of a discourse.

I THE CHARACTER OF CORNELIUS.

(1.) Who was he? He was an officer of the Roman army, the commander of a hundred men, as the term *centurion* implies. As Judea was then a subjugated province of the Roman Empire, the band or cohort to which Cornelius belonged and which was called the Italian band, had been stationed at Cæsarea for the purpose of keeping order, and maintaining the authority of the Roman government. He was not only a Gentile standing without the pale of Jewish favor, but was also occupying a position calculated to arouse the bitterest hatred as well as the most inveterate prejudice of the Jewish people.

(2.) What was his moral and religious character?

This is a question of much greater importance in this investigation than the one relating to his race and official position. He is placed before us by Luke as "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much

alms to the people, and prayed to God always," also as "a just man of good report among all the nation of the Jews." Since he had been in Judea, Cornelius had had ample opportunities of observing the worship of the Jews, had doubtless to some extent become acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, and had heard no little concerning the wonderful prophet of Nazareth. Through all these means his mind had been greatly enlightened, his heart had been turned away from the idols of Greece and Rome, and he had become a devout worshiper of the only true and living God.

(3.) What was his relation to God, and to Christ?

This question is of the very greatest importance in this investigation. Though a believer in the Old Testament, and a sincere worshiper of Jehovah, Cornelius had never been circumcised, and was not therefore in covenant relation with the God of Israel. And as the gospel had not been preached to him, he was not a disciple of Jesus, how ever much he may have heard and learned concerning Him. He was simply an enlightened Gentile who had rejected Paganism, and was worshiping the true God according to the light that had dawned upon his mind and the grace that had shone into his heart. With all this he was yet standing outside both the commonwealth of Israel and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His character as drawn by the pen of inspiration is lovely indeed. We fear that the character of many church members in this favored land and age of ours, would suffer greatly in comparison with that of Cornelius. Yet with all his devotion, prayer, fear of the Lord, and alms-giving, he was still in an important respect in an unsaved condition. Be not startled at this; for the same pen that describes this lovely character also declares that he was unsaved in terms too plain to be overlooked or mistaken. The messenger of the Lord who said to him, "Thy prayer

is heard," also said, "Send to Joppa and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house." (Acts, 11: 13, 14.) Devout and upright as he was, there were yet things that he ought to do, of which Peter will speak to him when he comes; and when he learns these things then he must do them in order to the personal enjoyment of that present salvation which is found in Christ, and not out of Christ.

As there is a tendency in some minds to fly off at a tangent on untaught and impractical questions, based on imaginary and exceptional cases, the inquiry may here be raised, "What would have become of this good man, had he died previous to this time?" For myself and myself alone, I hesitate not to express my heart-felt conviction, that had he died before he had the opportunity of hearing the gospel, and while living up to the full measure of the light he had, it would have been well with him in the life to come; but then he would have passed up into that state of happiness, neither through the commonwealth of Israel, nor the Church of Christ on earth. And if there were any blessings in the former, and if there are any blessings in the latter, which those without were not and are not permitted to enjoy, then he would have missed the enjoyment of these special blessings in this life simply and solely because they were not brought within his reach, though saved in the life to come because he did the best he could according to the light and knowledge he had. The Savior expressly teaches, "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sins." (John 15: 22.) All men are responsible in exact proportion to the light and knowledge that they have or might have had by availing themselves of all the means brought within their reach. The condemnation of the gospel is against those who disbelieve it

or reject it when brought to them.

But this inquiry is not of any particular importance whatever to any of us, and does not in the least affect the responsibility of any one who has ever heard the gospel of Christ. Cornelius did not die previous to this time. He lived to hear, believe, and obey the gospel of Christ; and to enjoy in this life all the blessings which God had connected with this obedience. Imaginary cases do not constitute the rule of duty; nor do exceptional cases lessen, much less destroy, our responsibility for all the opportunities that we have. The point that I would emphasize just here is this—Cornelius a just, devout, God-fearing, almsgiving, prayerful man, had to hear something, and do something, in order to his own salvation in this life. All that he had learned of God and of Christ previous to this time was so much gained, and did not have to be learned anew. The desire of his heart, and the deeds of his life were all in the right direction. His alms and his prayers were pleasing to God. But morality and devotion and almsgiving, all combined, do not of themselves constitute any one a disciple of Jesus, or bring any one into the actual enjoyment of the blessings found in the kingdom of God. If they do, then Cornelius was already in the Church, and in a saved state, before the gospel was preached to him, and if this is true, then this is not a case of conversion at all, as Luke says it is, and the whole narrative is as great a riddle as was ever propounded to men.

But, on the other hand, had Cornelius rejected the gospel when it was preached to him, he would certainly have been lost. His devotion and alms-giving would not have availed him against a rejection of Jesus as his Lord and Savior. This is neither an imaginary nor an exceptional case. Thousands of Jews who were benevolent, devout, and prayerful, rejected the gospel, and were cut off from the enjoyment of the divine favor. Many up-

right, honorable, benevolent and moral men are living to-day in utter rejection of Christ's proffered mercy, and have been so living for many years.

The question for you to consider as responsible beings is not, "What will become of those who have never heard gospel, and have therefore never had the opportunity to either accept or reject it?" but, "What will become of you, if you die without receiving and obeying the gospel?" This is a practical question. This question presents a real case, not an imaginary one. This is a personal question. It comes home to the heart of each and every one of you and demands an answer. You have heard the the gospel for many years. You hear it now. You may read its messages of mercy by day, and meditate upon it by night. It convicts you of sin, and offers you a Savior. What will you do with it? Will you, can you, spurn its overtures of love, and turn away from the salvation it brings? If so, and you die in this state, you are lost forever. O, sinner! Think of your own case; consider your own responsibility; consult your own interests for time and eternity; and may the Lord lead you into the light and knowledge and enjoyment of the truth.

II. THE MISSION OF THE ANGEL.

(1.) What message did the angel bring? The angel said unto him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter." The men who were sent said to Peter that Cornelius "was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee." Cornelius represents the angel as saying, "Thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send, therefore, to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter." Peter in rehearsing the matter represents the

angel as saying, "Send to Joppa and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall speak unto thee words whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." This expresses the purpose of Peter's visit to him.

(2.) In what state, or relation to God was Cornelius when the angel left him? Evidently in the same state as before the angel came. The angel did not reveal to him another gospel, did not preach to him the gospel already revealed, did not speak "peace unto his soul," or in any other way give to him the assurance that his sins were forgiven. Cornelius was still out of Christ. still in his unconverted Gentile state, and had yet to hear words whereby he and his house might be saved. Angels are not permitted to preach the gospel to sinners. The Word of Reconciliation was not committed to them but to the apostles; and the apostles not angels, were to make it known to all nations in order to the obedience of faith. Hence the angel simply announced the fact that God was pleased with the prayer and the alms of Cornelius, and then directed him to send for Peter and place himself under Peter's instructions.

(3.) Why then the angel's visit? Simply in the absence of other means and agencies, to put Cornelius in communication with that apostle whom God had chosen to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. This was the formative period of the Church, for the establishment of which, extraordinary means and agencies were required. The gospel plan of salvation had not yet been fully developed in relation to the Gentile world. The Lord was gradually unfolding its grand truths and principles, as the builders, the apostles and their colaborers, needed them. The Church as the body of Christ, had not yet come "unto a full-grown man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Preachers were not found at that time as they are now, in every town and village. New

Testaments were not then printed by the million, distributed throughout the land, and given to all who were not able to buy, as they are now in this country. In the absence of such means and agencies, God sent an angel to tell Cornelius to send for Peter in order that Peter might teach him the way of life.

But if we expect God to send an angel to us with the message of salvation, we will deceive ourselves and grossly pervert this scriptural incident. We do not need the visit of an angel to tell us to send for Peter, or anyone else; for in the New Testament we have all the testimony of Peter and the other apostles, the teaching of the Lord himself, and the completed revelations of the Holy Spirit. If men will not receive the words of Jesus, the preaching of inspired apostles, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, then they would not receive the message of an angel, or the declaration of one who had risen from the dead. If an angel sent to a man who did not have the New Testament or any part of it, was not permitted to preach the gospel to him, tell him what to do to be saved, or assure him of the pardon of his sins, how can we expect God to send an angel to us, either visibly or invisibly, to declare His will, or speak peace to our souls, when we already have in our possession the whole of His revealed will, from which we may all learn the way of truth and life? Can we expect God to do more for us than He did for Cornelius, or any one else, even in that age of signs and wonders? Not reasonably or with any scriptural assurance. Yet God would do more for us than He did for any one who was converted under the ministry of the apostles, should He bestow upon us the knowledge and enjoyment of salvation by means of visions.

“And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."

Like Saul of Tarsus, he "was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." He did at once what the Lord through the angel commanded him to do, and awaited the result. Now it would have saved much time on his part, and labor on the part of others, for the angel to have told him at once what to do to be saved; but this would not have been in accordance with the Lord's way of saving men; and the Lord's way is not only the best, but the only one that does save. All others are inefficient and delusive.

Cornelius did not raise any question concerning the essentiality of any of the Lord's requirements. He did not ask why the angel could not tell him at once, and thus end the matter. He did not suggest that some one else would do just as well as Peter. He did not inquire if God could not save him as easily without means as with means.

What presumptuous trifling with the mercy of God, this would have been! It belongs to a speculative, hair-splitting, theorizing, semi-skeptical age, to raise such questions as these. Cornelius was just simple enough to send off to Joppa for Simon Peter, to hear what he said, and do what he commanded; *but he was saved.*

III. THE VISION GRANTED TO PETER.

While the messengers of Cornelius were drawing nigh unto Joppa on the second day of the journey, Peter went out on the house top to pray; and there he had a vision which in connection with subsequent events unfolded to him the purposes of God with reference to the Gentiles, and prepared him to preach the gospel to men of every nation, and admit them into the enjoyment of all its blessings without laying on them the burden of observing all the requirements of the Mosaic law. In his defense before the church at Jerusalem the apostle gives the following

description of this vision:

"I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: upon the which when I had fastened my eyes I considered, and saw the four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the heaven.

And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But I said, not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath entered into my mouth. But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed call thou not common. And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again to heaven." Acts 11:5-10.

The import of this strange vision was gradually unfolded to the mind of Peter, and will be fully developed as we proceed.

IV. THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

While Peter was revolving in his own mind the strange scene which had been thus presented to his vision, and was at an utter loss as to its import, the messengers of Cornelius appeared at the gate and inquired for Simon whose surname was Peter. The Spirit now comes to the relief of the perplexed apostle, informs him of the arrival of the men who were seeking him, bids him dismiss all doubts and go with them, for God had sent them. The Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus to the apostles, was, among other things, to guide them into all the truth. This work the Spirit did for them, not all at once, but from time to time as they needed the knowledge that was communicated to them. On the day of Pentecost the Spirit revealed to them all that they needed to know at that time in order to the exercise of their ministry among the Jewish people.

As their work progressed the Spirit made known to

them what was needed in order to the proper regulation of church affairs and the dissemination of the truth.

But the time had now come when the privileges of the gospel were to be offered to men of every race. Hence, an additional revelation must be made to Peter, that by him it may be made known to the world and bound upon the saints. We may learn here how the Spirit works, what means and agencies He uses in convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In this case the Spirit did not come directly to Cornelius, and in some mysterious way enlighten his mind, give rest to his soul, and usher him into the kingdom. God in His own wisdom had chosen Peter that by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe; and the Spirit is now preparing him for the accomplishment of this divinely appointed work. But this neither robs God of the glory of saving the Gentiles nor sets aside the agency of the Holy Spirit in convicting them of sin and bringing them into the fold of Christ. It was none the less God's work because it was done through the agency of God's chosen servants. "The word of the gospel" was none the less the Spirit's word than it would have been if the Spirit himself had spoken audibly to Cornelius and his friends, or by inspiration had imparted a knowledge of the truth to their hearts. The work from the beginning to the end was God's work: yet it was accomplished through the agency of the apostle and the instrumentality of the truth.

V. PROVIDENTIAL EVENTS.

The arrival of the messengers, just as Peter awoke out of his trance and was meditating on the wonderful vision he had seen, shows that God was directing all these events to a gracious and glorious end. The statement which was made by the messengers of the cause and object of their visit, was the first link in the chain of remarkable events

that gradually unfolded to Peter the full import of the vision itself.

Another providential event we find in the fact that six Jewish brethren from Joppa accompanied Peter when he went away with the messengers. There would be need for these brethren, as we will see farther on, first at Cæsarea and then at Jerusalem. It may have been a wise precaution on the part of Peter to take them along, but it was none the less providential; for neither he nor they knew at this time what would occur at Cæsarea. The Holy Spirit doubtless put it into the hearts of these brethren to go with Peter, and as they went they doubtless wondered in their minds what would be the issue of this strange affair.

VI. THE AUDIENCE TO BE ADDRESSED.

While Cornelius was waiting for the arrival of Peter, he "called together his kinsmen and his near friends" that they too might hear the word of life. The audience embraced the following classes of persons: (1) Cornelius, whose character has already been described; (2) his household, including servants; (3) soldiers who had waited on him continually, one of whom at least, like himself, was a devout man; (4) his kinsmen and his near friends. The aggregate of all these must have been a considerable number; for it is said that Peter "went in and found that many had come together." Looking around upon this waiting assembly the true import of the vision which he had seen in Joppa flashed upon the mind of the apostle, and he said to them:

"Ye yourselves know how unlawful a thing it is for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; yet unto me hath God shewed that I shall not call any man common or unclean; wherefore also I came without gainsay when I was sent for."

The clean beasts in the vision evidently represented the Jews in their former covenant relation with God; the unclean beasts just as evidently represented the Gentiles in their unconverted relation toward God. The command addressed to Peter to kill and eat, and the response to the objection showed that all distinction of race had been abolished forever, and from this time onward there is to be "no distinction between the Jew and the Greek" so far as the blessings of salvation are concerned, for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon Him."

Peter now asks for what purpose they have sent for him. Cornelius rehearses the matter from the beginning, commends Peter for coming and adds: "Now, therefore, we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord. It is evident from the character of the audience, as well as what Cornelius here says, that all who were then present, were capable of hearing, understanding, believing and obeying the gospel; each on his own responsibility.

VII. THE DISCOURSE OF THE APOSTLE.

What a wonderful array of agencies means and instrumentalities is presented to our consideration in the preceding portion of the narrative.

An angel has appeared to Cornelius, delivered a message from God and departed. A wonderful vision has been seen by the entranced apostle, and the voice of the Lord has been heard uttering a command of strange import to Peter's Jewish ears. Messengers have been sent from Cæsarea to Joppa, have delivered their message and returned. The Holy Spirit has commanded Peter to go with them, doubting nothing, for God has sent them. Four days have passed away since the angel had stood before Cornelius and announced to him that his prayers and his alms had gone up as a memorial before God. Although

so many and such wonderful events have occurred, Cornelius is not yet in Christ, is not yet saved, not yet converted. He is still as the angel found and left him, only a partially enlightened Gentile, out of covenant relation with God and Christ, yet devoutly worshiping the God of Israel according to the light and knowledge that he enjoyed.

And now the apostle has arrived, the audience is waiting with anxious hearts to hear what he may say, and the Holy Spirit is present in all his enlightening, quickening and comforting power, as he always is, wherever the people of God and the gospel of Christ are found. Is anything yet needed in order to the conversion of Cornelius and his friends? There certainly is. The gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, is yet to be preached unto them. Peter is yet to speak to them, tell them what they ought to do, and declare unto them words whereby they might be saved. Plants do not and cannot spring up without seed; hence the incorruptible seed, the word of God that lives and abides forever, must be deeply implanted within their hearts, that they may be begotten to a new life in Christ Jesus. All the truly wonderful means and agencies that have been used up to this time, were employed for the purpose of bringing the messenger of Jesus and this Gentile audience together, and for the additional purpose of preparing the mind of Peter to preach the gospel to the Gentiles as he did to the Jews, and opening the hearts of the Gentiles to receive the gospel when preached to them. Let us now direct our attention to the discourse itself.

“And Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him. The word which He sent unto the

children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace, by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom also they slew; hanging Him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God; even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He who is ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:34-45.)

Like Paul, Peter knew nothing "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," as the ground of the believer's acceptance with God. The sum and substance of his discourse is Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed of God, in His life, death burial, resurrection, and mediation, as the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, the Lord of all, and the judge of the living and the dead. Not only the preaching of the apostles, but also the testimony of the prophets, points to him as the One and the only One through whose name believers in Him may receive the remission of sins. The apostle brings the whole matter to a decisive test, which may be stated thus: Receive Jesus as your Savior, and live; or reject him and die.

The Word of God, as the sword of the Spirit, pierced their hearts with the deepest conviction of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of their own need of Him as their Savior. The

Word of Truth as the incorruptible seed of the kingdom, took possession of their hearts, and begot therein a living and purifying faith. And now God confirms the testimony of the apostle "by signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Spirit." As the middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles had already been broken down by the death of Jesus, God now puts forth the hand of His power, and sweeps away forever the prejudice, the exclusiveness and the hatred that had been accumulating for ages along that wall, thus opening up the way for men of every race to mingle together and sing the song of redeeming love.

VIII. THE OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed, were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit." Let us now in a truth-loving spirit endeavor to ascertain what this miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit did for the Gentiles. Did it give them faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Certainly not, according to Peter's understanding of the matter; for he said in the conference at Jerusalem, "Brethren ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." (Acts 15:7.) It was through the testimony of Peter therefore, that they were enabled to believe.

Did this gift of the Holy Spirit purify and cleanse their hearts? Peter did not so understand the matter; for when he returned to Jerusalem, he said to the brethren with reference to this point:—"And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them cleansing their hearts by faith." It

was by faith then that their hearts were purified or cleansed, and not by the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit; and their faith came through the hearing of the gospel by the mouth of Peter.

Did this gift bestow on them the remission of sins?

Let us see. Peter's discourse was interrupted at this statement:—"To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." The remission of sins is an act of divine clemency, bestowed on those who are prepared in heart and life to receive and enjoy it, through the name of Jesus, and not through the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.

Was this gift then the evidence to each one who received it, that God for Christ's sake had pardoned his sins?

I think not; for if this special gift is the evidence of pardon, then no man now living has that evidence; for no man since the days of the apostles has received such a wonder-working gift of the Holy Spirit as that which was here bestowed on these Gentiles.

What then was the character of this gift, and what its object? The apostle in explaining the matter, when he returned to Jerusalem, represented it as an event similar to that which occurred on the day of Pentecost; and it is worthy of consideration that this is the only event, among all the wonderful things that occurred under the ministry of the apostles, that is likened to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Says Peter,—

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God."

This settles the character of this gift as the promised baptism in the Holy Spirit, now bestowed on the Gentiles, as it had been on the Jews at the beginning. I will not say that there were no other instances of baptism in the Holy Spirit during the apostolic age; but it is simply a fact that these two events, the first at Jerusalem, the second at Cæsarea, are the only events that are characterized by the apostle as filling the measure of that baptism in the Holy Spirit which was promised first by John and then by Jesus. On questions like this, where the Scriptures speak, we may speak with the greatest confidence; but where they are silent, we should be as silent as the grave.

As to the object of this gift, it was twofold. First, it was a confirmation of the apostle's testimony concerning Jesus. Second it was a declaration on the part of God Himself that the Gentiles on their own personal faith in Jesus and obedience to Him were to be admitted into the full participation of all gospel blessings and privileges on terms of perfect equality with the Jews. This declaration was made *once for all*.

In the light of these facts we may see why it was that the Holy Spirit fell on them just at this point of time. The apostle had reached that point in his discourse, beyond which he could not have advanced a single step with the concurrence of his Jewish brethren, without this manifestation of God's approbation and purpose. He had preached to them "Christ Jesus and Him crucified;" he had summed up all prophetic teaching in the declaration that "through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins;" and the next step must have been, as indeed it was, to command them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But to the baptism of uncircumcised Gentiles these Jewish brethren never would have consented without this decisive manifestation, of God's will in the matter; nor without this manifestation,

could Peter ever have satisfied the church at Jerusalem of the propriety of his conduct in receiving and associating with Gentiles.

Indeed this is just the use that Peter made of this event. On its occurrence, he at once turned to the six Jewish brethren who were looking on, doubtless in utter astonishment, and said.—“Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?” Not one of them dared to forbid. God had put forth the hand of His power, had laid it on their mouths, and sealed their lips against all objections. When Peter was arraigned before the church at Jerusalem for going in unto men who were uncircumcised and eating with them, he rested his defense on this signal expression of God’s will. Briefly rehearsing the whole matter, when he came to this event he said,—“Who was I, that I could withstand God?” which shows that he regarded this gift as the direct expression of God’s purpose concerning the Gentiles. This statement vindicated Peter, and settled the matter; for, “when they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.” They now see clearly what they had never seen before, that the Gentiles are to enjoy the same privilege that they themselves enjoy of coming to Christ through the means revealed in the gospel.

This miraculous manifestation of God’s gracious purpose with reference to the Gentile world was made therefore once for all. It has never been repeated, and never will be, for the best of reasons; there never has been, and never can be, any necessity for its repetition. It would be as reasonable to expect that a vision similar to that which was seen by Peter, will be granted to all preachers who may have occasion to enter into a new field of labor, as to expect that a gift similar to that which was bestowed on

Cornelius, will fall on sinners now in order to their conversion. The gift conferred on these Gentiles at this time, was not for their benefit only, but for ours also; in a word, it was for the benefit of all Gentiles in all subsequent time.

As the door of faith, which was then and there opened, has always remained, and still remains open, we may now enter through the same door into the enjoyment of the same blessings which were granted to them by this manifestation of God's gracious purpose. While our Heavenly Father yet gives the Spirit as a *Comforter* to all who love and serve Him, He does not bestow miraculous gifts on any, either before baptism or after baptism, either to make them Christians or because they are Christians. Hence sinners who are seeking the way of salvation should not be taught to look for such manifestations of the Spirit as were here put forth for a special purpose; for such gifts are not promised to them. They should be taught to come in through the door of faith here opened once for all, seeking the remission of their sins in God's appointed way through the name of the Crucified One.

Although this gift-bestowing baptism in the Holy Spirit was not the evidence or assurance of pardon which is for the comfort of all the children of God, it was nevertheless a witness, a mighty witness, and a convincing witness of that which could not have been so well attested by any other means. It was a witness to the Gentiles who received it, a witness to Peter and the six Jewish brethren who beheld it, a witness to the church at Jerusalem when they heard of it, and a witness to all men who may read of it; but a witness of what? It was, and is, and will continue to be a witness of the gracious fact that the door of gospel mercy has been thrown wide open to men of every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue; and that it will remain invitingly open to all the care-worn and sin-burdened sons and daughters of men until the Lord himself shall

come to open the portals of endless glory.

IX. THE BAPTISM OF THOSE WHO HAD RECEIVED THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

It is often said that if men are baptized in the Holy Spirit, it is a matter of but little importance whether they are baptized in water or not; but Peter acting under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit did not reason in this way. The *Commission* under which he was laboring commanded him to teach men, and then to baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; and the only baptism that he could administer was baptism in water. The same commission declares that "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved," showing that it is the believer's duty to obey the Lord in baptism; but the only baptism in which any one can render any obedience is baptism in water. The apostles were never authorized or empowered to baptize any one in the Holy Spirit; and no one was ever commanded to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The baptism in the Holy Spirit could be administered by the Lord only, as John the Baptist clearly taught; and it was a promise to the disciples to be enjoyed by them whenever the Lord should see fit to bestow it upon them. The subjects of this promised baptism in the Holy Spirit had no agency whatever in receiving it. It came to them suddenly and in the case of the Gentiles unexpectedly, enabling them to speak with other tongues in magnifying God for His wonderful mercy.

Doubtless the Gentiles were as greatly astonished when the Holy Spirit fell on them, as were the six Jewish brethren; but their baptism in the Holy Spirit instead of releasing them from the obligation to be baptized in water, as the Lord had commanded, only increased that obligation. The reason now assigned why men need not be baptized in water, is the very reason which Peter assigned

why these Gentiles should be baptized in water. "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" Now which will we receive in this matter, the mere inference of fallible men, or the decision of the inspired apostles? As for me I will follow the apostles. No man forbidding, no man daring to forbid,—“He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”

Now when did they receive the assurance that God for Christ's sake had taken away their sins? When did they enter into the personal enjoyment of that redemption which we have in Christ Jesus through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins? When were they invested with all the privileges and blessings found in the Church of God? Evidently when they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Peter had authoritatively stated that “through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins.” The state of the case then is this:—Believing in Jesus with all the heart, and turning away from all sin, when they were baptized in the name of Jesus as the Christ, and thus completed their conversion or turning to the Lord, they received the full and free and final remission of all past sins not through their baptism, nor their faith, nor their repentance, nor their prayers, nor through the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit—but through the name, through the blood and through the mediation of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Their faith and repentance and baptism, each in its own place and all united, simply prepared them for, and brought them into the enjoyment of the many blessings which God has placed in the kingdom of His Son, the first of which is the remission of sins, and all of which are procured for us by the death of Jesus, and secured to us by His mediation at the right hand of God. Hence they

are said to come to us through His name, and through His blood.

But again, who or what characters, were here baptized? Those who received the Holy Spirit. There can not be any uncertainty or doubt about this. Those who had received the Holy Spirit were the only ones for whom Peter demanded the privilege of baptism, and the only ones whom he commanded to be baptized. But who were they who received the Holy Spirit? They, and they only, who heard the word. Luke says, "The Holy Spirit fell on all them who heard the word;" and this is equivalent to saying that it did not fall on any who did not hear the word. How did Peter and the six Jewish brethren know that the Holy Spirit had fallen on these Gentiles? "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." Were they all believers in Christ? Unquestionably they were; for Peter declares that by his mouth the Gentiles heard the word and believed.

In conclusion I present a brief summary of the whole matter. Hearing the word of the gospel, they believed; and by this faith their hearts were purified or cleansed.

But this cleansing of the heart by faith is not the bestowal of the remission of sins, but an indispensable preparation for the enjoyment of that remission which God grants through the name and through the blood of Jesus.

Their hearts having been cleansed by faith, the Holy Spirit fell on them as on the Jewish believers at the beginning, manifesting beyond all doubt that God had once for all opened the door of mercy to the entire Gentile world.

The door of gospel mercy having thus been opened, they were all commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and when they were thus baptized, they certainly entered into the full enjoyment and participation of the blessings, privileges, helps, hopes and comforts, that are found in the Church or Body of Christ.

From this time onward there has been no difference between the Jew and the Greek in the bestowal on them, or enjoyment by them, of divine favors. There is but one Lord over all; and He is rich in mercy unto all that call upon Him. The gracious decree has gone forth to the ends of the earth, and is to go down to the end of time, that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Divine mercy is ever pleading for and with men, is ever saying, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." How deeply the Gentile World is indebted to the favor of that day in Caesarea, and how vast have been and will be its results, Eternity alone can reveal! O sinner! Jew or Gentile, it matters not which, that door of mercy stands open before you. The invitation is addressed to you. The Salvation within is prepared for you. Why not enter in and live forever?

"Let every mortal ear attend,
And every heart rejoice;
The trumpet of the gospel sounds
With an inviting voice.

"Ho! you that pant for living streams,
And pine away and die,
Here may you quench your raging thirst
With springs that never dry.

"Rivers of love and mercy here
In a rich ocean join;
Salvation in abundance flows,
Like floods of milk and wine.

"The happy gates of gospel grace
Stand open night and day;
And here may men of every race
Wash all their sins away."

Seventh Sermon.

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

“Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.” (1 Tim. I: 15.)

Brief as is the history contained in the *Acts of Apostles*, its twenty-eight chapters covering some thirty years of a period crowded with wonderful events, we nevertheless find in it three detailed accounts of the conversion of Saul. In the ninth chapter Luke presents his own statement of the case, the facts of which he had doubtless learned from the apostle himself. In the twenty-second chapter he records Paul's defense of himself before the Jewish brethren of Jerusalem, and in the twenty-sixth, his defense before Agrippa, in each of which the apostle gives a succinct account of his own conversion. As each of these accounts furnishes us with some facts not mentioned in either of the others, we must group them all together, and carefully consider all the facts as thus found, in order to a correct understanding and fair presentation of the case.

Although these accounts differ in some respects, there is no discrepancy between them with reference to anything that constituted any part of Saul's conversion; yet in two incidental statements, there is an apparent discrepancy which some have endeavored to torture into a direct contradiction. Luke says at 9:9, that “the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but beholding no man.” Paul says, as stated at 22:6: “And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.” Both of these statements, quoted from the *Revised Version*, which is cor-

rect because in exact accordance with the original, refer unquestionably to the same utterance of the same voice. But one voice had spoken, and that was the voice of Jesus. It devolves on us then to show how they could hear the voice, as Luke says, and at the same time hear not the voice that spake to him, as Paul says. I do not regard this, however, as by any means a difficult task.

A careful examination of the context in each case, and a candid consideration of the different senses in which the word *hear* is commonly used, will convince all fair minds, I think, that there is not even a discrepancy, much less a contradiction, between these statements. We ourselves often hear, and do not hear, the same voice at the same time. We hear in one sense, but do not hear in another sense; for the word *hear*, like many others, is used in different senses. In some instances it means more than it does in others. Its precise meaning in any given case is to be determined by its context. We often hear the sound of a voice but do not catch the words, or understand what the voice says. In the primary sense, we hear the voice. In another and quite common sense of the word, we do not hear the voice. So it evidently was in this case. The voice addressed Saul only. It was *audible* to his companions, as Luke's statement says. It was *intelligible* to him only, as his own statement clearly implies. "Hearing the voice," that is, the sound of the voice. "But they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me," That is, they understood not what Jesus said to Saul.

An incident in the life of the Savior recorded by John (12:28-29), strikingly illustrates this matter, and strongly confirms this explanation. When the Father addressed the Son, declaring that He had glorified, and would again glorify His name, some of the people who stood by said it thundered, and others said that an angel had spoken to Him. The voice was audible to them, but not intelligible:

and while they heard it in one sense, they did not hear it in another.

The other so-called discrepancy is of less importance, if possible, and more easily disposed of than the preceding. Luke says that "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless;" but Paul says, "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice," etc. To make the alleged discrepancy as sharp as possible, Luke says they stood, and Paul says they all fell down. That both of these statements are literally true, I have not a doubt. They simply relate to different points of time. Paul states what occurred when the great light burst upon them. Luke states the attitude of the men while the Lord was talking to Saul. Luke does not deny that they all fell down at first; nor does Paul deny that they stood while the voice was speaking to him. Where then is the contradiction or discrepancy? Saul was commanded to arise and stand upon his feet; and it is certainly within the bounds of reason to suppose that his companions arose and stood also, as they were not at all hurt, and there was nothing to prevent them. These apparent discrepancies disposed of, I trust satisfactorily, I proceed to open up the subject as a case of conversion.

I. THE CHARACTER OF SAUL AND HIS RELATION TO GOD.

Paul the apostle has so fully described the character of Saul the persecutor, that we will let him relate his own history. "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day, and I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering unto prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders; from whom also I received letters unto the brethren,

and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to be punished." (Acts 22:3-5.)

On another occasion he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem; and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them. And punishing them often times in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. (Acts 26:9-11,)

To the Galatians, 1:13,14, he writes, "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and made havock of it; and I advanced in the Jew's religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the tradition of my fathers." To the Philippians, 3:5,6, he says of himself, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." In his first letter to Timothy, 1:13-16, he represents himself as having been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," as the "chief" of sinners and therefore a monument of God's mercy, and "example of them who should thereafter believe on Him unto eternal life."

In these passages we find the character of Saul of Tarsus faithfully described and drawn by his own tongue and pen long after his conversion. I ask especial attention to what the suffering apostle says of his own thoughts and purposes, character and conduct, before his conversion.

He was devoted to the religion and traditions of his fathers, zealous toward God, blameless as touching the righteousness which is in the law, and conscientious in the discharge of what he thought to be his duty; and yet with reference to Jesus and His disciples, a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an injurious man. On the one hand, he was a deeply religious man, on the other, he was the chief of sinners. We learn from these facts that a man may be as deeply in earnest in propagating error as in disseminating truth; as conscientious in doing wrong as in doing right; as zealous in persecuting the church of God as in preaching the gospel of Christ.

These facts utterly explode that prevalent but pernicious idea, that it matters not what a man believes or thinks, provided he is sincere. Saul of Tarsus was sincere and conscientious in doing the very things that made him the chief of sinners. In this he verified a prophetic warning of the Savior: "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God." It does matter then what a man thinks and believes. Indeed it is a matter of vital importance. No amount of sincerity can change error into truth, wrong into right, or give to the one the power and value of the other. I once saw the body of a sweet little babe let down into the cold grave, because her loving mother with her own gentle hand had administered a large dose of morphine, believing in her heart that it was quinine. Poison kills just as surely when thought to be food or medicine, as when known to be poison. So error misleads and destroys though it may be conscientiously believed to be the truth.

There are many questions, however, with reference to which, it does not matter in the least what a man believes, or whether he believes anything at all about them; but the

reason of this is that the questions themselves are of no importance whatever, and have no power for good or evil. The Bible, however, does not deal in questions of this character. It presents matters of vital importance to our consideration; and a man's belief with reference to its divine truths and eternal verities, shapes his conduct, forms his character, determines his relation to God, and fixes his destiny.

Again, we learn from these facts concerning Saul's life previous to his conversion what gave him the bad pre-eminence of being the chief of sinners. It was not indulgence in gross sins and degrading vices, such as profanity, drunkenness, and debauchery; for Saul was not a sinner of this kind. Sinners of this class are to a great extent without influence. They injure and destroy themselves rather than others. Their excesses disgust and repel all who have not fallen as low as themselves. It is the man of orderly habits, of courteous manners, of learning and wit, of position and wealth, who, when an enemy of truth and righteousness, wields an immense power for evil. Such a man instills the poison of unbelief and immorality into the hearts of the young and unsuspecting, and leads them astray before they are aware of their danger. Such a man is of sinners a very chief, as was Saul of Tarsus, however honorable he may be in the estimation of the world.

To oppose the gospel of Christ, and to persecute the people of God, are the greatest sins in the sight of Heaven which puny mortals can commit. He that gets drunk and wallows in the mire and filth of the gutters, may plead the strength of his depraved appetite as an apology to some extent for his vice. He that steals food or raiment for himself or family, may plead the want and woe of starving and shivering wife and children in extenuation of his offense. He that smites his fellow man to death, may

plead the greatness of the provocation and the heat of his anger as a palliation of his crime. But the man who opposes the truth and persecutes those who hold it, assails the highest and most enduring interests of humanity, defies the authority of Jehovah, and tramples the blood of Jesus under his unhallowed feet. He can have no plea but that of ignorant unbelief; and this itself in many instances is a sin of no small magnitude.

Luke gives us a few glimpses of Saul before his conversion, in all of which we find him among the enemies of the Lord. When Stephen was stoned, "the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." It is also said that "Saul was consenting unto his death." In the persecution that followed the death of Stephen, Saul was an active participant. Indeed he seemed to have been the prime instigator of the movement, and its leader in person. "But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison." In this way he manifested his zeal toward God and his devotion to the traditions of his fathers.

As a Jew, Saul was already in covenant relation with God. He was familiar with all the prophecies that pointed to the coming of the Messiah. He longed, like all other Jews, for the re-establishment of the throne of David, and the world-wide supremacy of the Messiah's kingdom. All that was needed then in order to his conversion was to convince him of the Messiahship of Jesus, and then tell him what to do; for his whole life shows that he was always true to his own convictions of truth and duty.

II. SAUL CALLED TO BE AN APOSTLE.

The chapters in *Acts*, which contain the history of Saul's conversion to Christ, contain also the account of his call and commission as the apostle to the Gentiles. Bear-

ing in mind the two-fold character of this history, I will endeavor as I proceed with the investigation to distinguish clearly between the things that were necessary to constitute Saul an apostle of Jesus and a witness of his resurrection, and the things that belonged strictly to his conversion. I deem it not amiss to say that we cannot make a proper application of this case of conversion to inquiring sinners unless we clearly perceive this distinction ourselves, and can make it plain to others.

Saul might have been converted as thousands had been before, and as many millions have been since, and yet not called to be an apostle; but he could not do the work of an apostle until he had received the truth himself, turned to the Lord in heart and life, and enjoyed the fulness of that divine love and mercy, into the enjoyment of which he was to invite others. Hence, after he had seen the Lord, and had received his commission as an apostle, he had still to learn what had been appointed for him to do in order to his own personal enjoyment of the forgiveness of sins and other gracious blessings which the Father has placed in the kingdom of His Son.

We are now prepared, I trust, to consider an event, the like of which had never occurred before and has never occurred since, an event which was in order to the accomplishment of a special and specific object, which object could not in the nature of things have been accomplished in any other way.

III. JESUS HIMSELF APPEARS TO SAUL.

Luke gives the following account of this wonderful event: "But Saul yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus; and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven; and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; but rise and enter into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do.'" (Acts 9:1-16.)

At Jerusalem (Acts 22:4-8), and before Agrippa (Acts 26:12-15), Paul himself gave substantially the same account, adding that the voice spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue.

Now, for what purpose did Jesus thus visibly and audibly appear to Saul of Tarsus? Especial attention is invited to this question. Was it simply and solely to convert and save him? If it was, then the Lord did that for the conversion and salvation of Saul which He has never done for any other mortal on earth. I think it may be safely said, that if the conversion or personal salvation of Saul had been the only object in view, the Lord would never have appeared to him as He did. But to settle the matter in the shortest way, I appeal at once to the express statement of the Lord Himself; for He certainly knew for what purpose He appeared to Saul. To the prostrate persecutor He said: "But arise and stand upon thy feet; for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. (Acts 26:16-18.)

Can any thing be plainer or more definite than this positive declaration of the Lord himself? It was to make

Saul a *Minister* and a *Witness* of His resurrection that Jesus thus appeared to him; and here He gave to Saul his commission as the apostle to the Gentiles. Three days after this, Jesus repeated this purpose to Ananias, as we learn from Acts 9: 15-16,—“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me; to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel, for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” This purpose was again repeated by Ananias to Saul, as we learn from Acts 25: 14, 15,—“And he said, The God of our fathers has appointed thee to know His will, and to see the *Righteous One*, and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.”

That Saul might be constituted an apostle to the Gentiles, and made a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, it was necessary that he should see the Lord with his own eyes and hear Him speak with his own ears; for a witness can testify to that only which he himself has seen and heard. This is plainly and forcibly stated by Ananias in explanation of the Lord’s visible and audible appearance to Saul; and to this event in his life did Paul ever afterward appeal in proof of his apostleship and in support of his authority. “Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?” “And last of all, he appeared to me also.”

To see the Lord and hear His voice, as Saul of Tarsus saw and heard Him, is a miraculous event that is not essential to the conversion of sinners; for if it is, it follows that Saul was the last sinner that has ever been converted since the Lord ascended up on high, and indeed the only one, for he is the last and only one to whom the Lord ever thus appeared. All then who are looking for visions and listening for voices similar to this vision and voice, are laboring under a mischievous delusion. As Saul of Tarsus

was the last witness chosen, and the last apostle called by the Savior, so he was the last one on earth to see the Lord in His own proper person, and hear the voice of His mouth.

IV. SAUL'S PENITENT INQUIRY.

"And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise and go to Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."

What a revolution has now taken place in the heart of Saul of Tarsus! All his thoughts concerning Jesus are changed, his purposes are changed, his affections are changed, the enmity of his heart is slain, adoration takes the place of blasphemy, and the fiery persecutor breathing out threatening and slaughter is now an humble suppliant at the feet of Jesus. What has produced this marvelous change? Evidently the heartfelt conviction that Jesus of Nazareth whose very name he had blasphemed was in deed and in truth the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior of sinners. But what produced this conviction? Not the brilliant light that shone around him, nor the voice which he at first heard, saying, "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou me?" although the one arrested his progress, and the other demanded his attention. Though smitten to the earth and overwhelmed with wonder and fear, he is still ignorant of the purport of the vision, and knows not who it is that thus addresses him. In his fear and wonder he now inquires, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the voice replies, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest."

This, under all the circumstances, was a proclamation of the gospel in all its fulness and power. Saul knew that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Messiah, and on this account had been put to death. He knew that the disci-

ples of Jesus claimed that He had risen from the dead, and had been exalted by the right of God; and on this account he was now following them with hostile intent to a strange city. And now he sees One shining with a glory that dims the luster of the noonday sun, and hears that One say, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." Never was such a sermon preached on earth before, and never has such a sermon been preached on earth since. It did not simply declare, but demonstrated the resurrection of Jesus and His exaltation by the right hand of God. It did not simply declare, but demonstrated His supreme divinity and mediatorial reign.

"I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting," was the sword-thrust that pierced the heart of Saul with conviction of his own sin, and begat in him a living, all-controlling faith in Jesus as the Son of God. It was this which drew from his heart the penitent cry, "What shall I do, Lord?" This was the question of a believing mind seeking for light and knowledge. This was the cry of a broken heart, asking for mercy and hope. How acceptable this must have been in the sight of God; and yet, strange as it may seem, the Lord did not directly answer this question by telling Saul what to do. He did not then grant to him the forgiveness of sins, speak peace to his soul, or give to him the assurance of his acceptance with God. It was not for this purpose that Jesus appeared unto him in so wonderful a manner; but, as we have already learned, to make him a minister and a witness of what he had seen and heard.

Having done for Saul what he came to do, the Savior says to him, "Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." From this we learn three things of great practical importance: (1.) There was something for Saul yet to do in order to his own personal enjoyment of the for-

givenness of sin; (2.) All things that he or any other sincere seeker of pardon is required to do, have already been appointed in the wisdom of God and revealed in the gospel of Christ; (3) These things Saul, and all others must learn, not directly from the Savior himself by means of a new revelation, but from those to whom the Savior has committed them, and by whom they were to be "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." Having given to Saul this direction which was so full of meaning, the Lord withdrew His personal presence, and left him an inquiring, believing, penitent man, subdued, but yet in an unpardoned state so far at least as his own personal experience was concerned.

V. THE ANSWER TO SAUL'S INQUIRY.

Saul inquires, "What shall I do?" The Lord replies, "Go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee." When was he told, what was he told, and by whom was he told? Let the record answer.

"And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on Him. And he said, The God of our fathers has appointed thee to know His will, and to see the *Righteous One*, and to hear a voice from His mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for Him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Acts 22: 11-16.

Luke in his account of the matter, Acts 9: 8-18, states that Saul was three days without sight, and that during this time he neither ate nor drank. He also informs us

that the Lord appeared to Ananias in a vision, commanded him to go and inquire for Saul, and added, "For behold he prayeth." By this vision the fears of Ananias were removed, and he was enabled to do for the penitent Saul what Peter by another and very different vision was enabled to do for the truth-seeking Cornelius. This is the only instance on record in which any one was kept in waiting even for an hour after asking in earnest, "What shall I do?" The reason of this will clearly appear, I think, in the sequel.

The intervening time was spent by Saul in the most becoming and profitable manner, that is in fasting and prayer. What passed through his mind during these three days can only be a matter of conjecture. I doubt not that he reviewed his past life in the deepest humiliation and sorrow, reflected with wonder and awe on the glorious vision which had so suddenly burst upon him, and contemplated with fear and trembling the unparalleled work to which he had been called. At length the messenger of the Lord whom he had already seen in a vision stands before him in person and at once states the purpose for which he had been sent to him.

The first object of his visit was that Saul might receive his sight. This would be to him conclusive evidence that Ananias was the special messenger of Jesus to tell him what to do. So when Ananias put his hands on him and addressed him, "straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight." This falling of scales pertains wholly to the restoration of his natural sight! He had been as blind as if impenetrable scales had covered his eyes, and now he receives his sight as suddenly as if scales had literally fallen from his eyes. The efforts that are sometimes made to spiritualize this event are fanciful and mystical in the extreme. The second object of his visit was that Saul might be filled with the

Holy Spirit. This was simply stated by Ananias. That it was fulfilled, we most confidently believe. When it was done, or how it was done, we know not. As not a word is said either by Luke or Paul on these points, I dare not venture even a conjecture. Both the promise and its fulfilment must have included all the gifts necessary to discharge all the functions of an apostle; for we are assured that in no gift did he come behind any of the apostles. The third object of this visit was that Saul might learn from Ananias the things appointed for him to do. This was not mentioned by Ananias himself, but had been stated emphatically by the Lord.

Up to this time Saul has been, and still is, a seeker of peace and pardon. He has seen the Lord, has been commissioned as an apostle, has received his sight again, has been assured that he is to be filled with the Holy Spirit; but he is still an unpardoned man. In this statement, I do not refer to what had taken place in the mind of God, but to that assurance which Saul did not then have, but was soon to have in his own heart. For aught I know to the contrary, he may have been pardoned in the mind of God, at least in purpose, when Jesus appeared to him, but, if so, he himself had not yet entered into the personal realization and enjoyment of this blessing. He has yet to receive the assurance of forgiveness. He has yet to be publicly and formally restored to the enjoyment of God's favor according to the organic law of the kingdom. I do not see how any man with the inspired record before him can deny that this is a true statement of the case,

But Ananias with the love of God in his heart, and the word of the Lord on his tongue, now stands ready to give to Saul the needed instruction, in order that he may enter into the full enjoyment of that peace and comfort which are found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. Divinely guided, He wisely adapts his admonition to Saul's present

condition in a spiritual point of view. He does not exhort him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; for Saul already believed with all his heart. He does not command him to repent of his sins; for Saul was already as deeply penitent as a mortal could be. He does not beseech him to pray; for Saul had been praying for three days with all the fervor of his soul. He does not tell him to wait for the Lord's good time; for the Lord's good time was already at hand. The very point of time has now been reached when Saul's conversion is to be consummated by an act of submission to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, for which submission the experience of the preceeding three days has prepared him in heart and life. Recognizing therefore his faith, his repentance, his prayers, as all well pleasing in the sight of God, Ananias speaking for the Lord says to him, "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name." Here he received the promised answer to his penitent cry, "What shall I do, Lord?" In heartfelt submission to this divine requirement, he realizes his own personal experience the assurance of forgiveness, and entered into that joy and comfort of the Holy Spirit promised to all who believe in and obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But did the water of baptism actually wash away his sins? By no means. It is the blood of Jesus that cleanseth from all sin. Was it through baptism as the source that pardon was received? Not at all. It is through the *name* of Jesus, as the prophets testify and the apostles preach, that "whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." But this blessing of forgiveness and comfort is in Christ and not out of Christ, "in whom" says Paul, "we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our tresspasses, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:4). Not faith, nor repentance, nor baptism, nor prayer, nor all combined, can remove the guilt or remit

the penalty of sin. It is God who forgives and justifies; and this He does through the mediation of Jesus whose blood cleanses the trusting soul of its guilt. It is God who by an act of executive clemency and of divine mercy remits the penalty incurred by transgression.

But the man himself must be prepared for the enjoyment of the divine favor before he can realize it in his own experience. Hence faith, repentance, and baptism, are all required of him as means of preparation and conditions of enjoyment. By faith in Jesus, the heart is purified; by repentance toward God, the life is renewed; by baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the state or relation is changed; and thus the man in his entire being is brought into actual participation of all the blessings found in the Church of God—blessings purchased for us by the blood of the Son, bestowed upon us by the grace of the Father, and sealed to us by the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Thus Saul of Tarsus was prepared for the enjoyment of these blessings, and thus he entered into the actual participation of them in his own experience.

With respect to these means and conditions, his conversion constitutes no exception to the *Rule of Conversion* which is given in the *Commission*. The same things were required of him which were required of all others. In faith, in repentance, in baptism, he turned to the Lord, calling on His Name; and this voluntary response to the call of mercy constituted his conversion in the scriptural import of the term.

His course in this respect furnishes a shining example that should be heartily followed by all who are seeking the way of life and peace.

But after all that may be said, or can be said, was not Saul's conversion a miraculous event? The answer to this will depend on the answer given to the question itself. If the question is understood as referring to the manner in

which, or the agency by which, the fundamental truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of sinners, and the Lord of glory, was brought to bear on the mind of Saul, the answer must be that in this respect it was unquestionably miraculous. The light that shone around him and arrested his journey was a miraculous light. The voice that addressed him and held his attention was a miraculous voice. And while the express purpose of Jesus in thus appearing to Saul was to make him a minister and a witness, the accomplishment of this object necessarily accomplished another which was the main cause of Saul's conversion. In seeing that "Righteous One," and in hearing "a voice from His mouth," Saul was convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, of His resurrection, of His exaltation, and His supreme Lordship—the fundamental facts of the gospel which all must believe in order to their own salvation, all of which were embodied in the heart-piercing declaration, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting." In a word, the gospel was preached to Saul by Jesus himself. In this respect, his conversion is unlike any other that has occurred since Jesus was exalted by the right hand of God; and we have no reason to expect that the like of it in this respect will ever occur again. Therefore as to the manner in which the gospel was preached to Saul, his case is not, and never has been an example to any one.

But the question may look in another direction. It may refer to the change that took place in the views, purposes, desires, and conduct of Saul himself; and that is the practical side of the question, the side which personally concerns each one of us. Was it miraculous for Saul to believe on Jesus after he had seen Him and heard Him? Was it miraculous for him to repent of all his blasphemies and persecutions after so wonderful a manifestation of divine mercy towards himself? Was it miraculous for him

to be baptized in obedience to the Lord of heaven and earth? If these things were miraculous, then Saul himself performed three miracles in his own conversion, and so does every sinner who turns to the Lord in faith, repentance, and baptism, as Saul did. If conversion is turning to the Lord as the Scriptures clearly teach, and if men turn to the Lord in receiving the truth, turning away from sin, and submitting to the authority of Jesus, then Saul's conversion was not miraculous, and is, and ever will be, a striking example to all who are seeking the Savior.

What mean these three days of fasting and prayer? They mean that Saul is to have the opportunity to give himself deliberately in heart and life to the Lord who had called him in love and mercy. Jesus had appeared to him in overwhelming power and majesty, demonstrating His resurrection and exaltation; and had called him to the widest field of labor ever given to a mortal. But he did not seize Saul as he stood trembling and awe-stricken before Him and by an irresistible power thrust him into the kingdom and thus bestow its blessings on a mere passive and irresponsible recipient. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," sang David concerning the Messiah. Hence Saul must have time to meditate upon this matter that he may accept the offered mercy, and enter willingly on the great work to which he had been called. He must have time to collect his thoughts, that he may yield an understanding and loving obedience to his Lord and Savior. Therefore the irresistible power that had arrested and detained him was withdrawn as soon as he was directed to go into the city, and there learn what was appointed for him to do. And when Ananias came and stood before him, he was prepared, in view of all that it involved, to give his heart and devote his life to the God who created, and to the Savior who redeemed him. Years afterward in rehearsing the matter, he said to king Aggrip-

pa, "Wherefore, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." This shows conclusively that he was not irresistibly forced either to turn to the Lord or enter on the work of an apostle. Had he refused to do either he would certainly have been lost, just as you will be lost, if you reject the overtures of mercy. A necessity was laid upon him, but it was the necessity of obligation or duty; hence he ever afterward felt, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." (I Cor. 9:16.)

By the supernatural light that shone around him he was smitten with blindness; but this was only for a short time. His mental eye, however, was not dimmed, nor was his spiritual perception in the least degree blunted. On the contrary, both were evidently quickened to the utmost extent of their capacity. The light that shone around Saul was never intended to blind any other mortal even physically, much less mentally and spiritually; but many, I fear have so blinded themselves by it, or permitted others to so blind them, that they can not distinguish between the calling of an apostle by the Lord, and the turning of a sinner to the Lord—between the proclamation of the gospel by Jesus in person and the voluntary submission of a believing, penitent, praying soul to the authority of Jesus after three days of meditation, fasting and prayer. The gospel preached by Jesus to Saul was not a new gospel, either in whole or part. It was the gospel of His life and death, burial and resurrection, exaltation and mediation—the gospel of the commission and the day of Pentecost—the gospel which went forth to all nations in order to the obedience of faith—the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes. In believing and obeying this gospel, Saul of Tarsus turned to the Lord, became a new creature, and was delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and was thus saved from sin and made an heir of

eternal life.

And now in conclusion, a word to the unconverted. The Lord will never descend in person to preach the gospel to you. It is not at all necessary for Him to do this in order to your salvation. All the means and agencies which are essential to your salvation are at hand. The word is nigh you, even in your mouth and your heart—the word of faith, the word of salvation, which was preached by the apostles, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit. To this *Word of Faith* you always have access. It has the same power now which it had in the days of the apostles. It assures you that “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Through the agencies established by Him, the Savior is constantly pressing this gospel on the consideration of your hearts. In it and through it, He offers you an interest in all the blessings secured by His sacrificial death and mediatorial reign. Will you not then like Saul of Tarsus, embrace this message of mercy with all your heart, turn away from the world and all its allurements, give yourself to Jesus and live forever?

“Come to Jesus! He will save you,
Though your sins as crimson glow;
If you give your heart to Jesus,
He will make them white as snow.”

“Come to Jesus! do not tarry,
Enter in at mercy’s gate;
Oh, delay not till the morrow,
Lest thy coming be too late.”

“Come to Jesus, dying sinner!
Other Savior there is none;
He will share with you His glory,
When your pilgrimage is done.”

Eighth Sermon.

THE CONVERSION OF THE SAMARITANS, AND THE CASE
OF SIMON THE SORCERER. Acts 8:4-24.

I. THE DISSEMINATION OF THE TRUTH BY THE DIS- PERSION OF THE SAINTS.

"They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the Word." How short sighted are the children of men! When the unbelieving Jews had succeeded for a time in breaking up the church at Jerusalem and dispersing its members, they doubtless thought they had utterly destroyed the cause of Christ in its very infancy; when in fact they had only given it a new impetus that would hasten its spread throughout Judea, and also introduce it into the regions beyond. The apostles, not fearing what men could do unto them, remained in the city to carry on the work there, and bring others into the fold of Christ; while the dispersed disciples carried the light of gospel truth wherever they went, and announced the glad tidings of salvation through the resurrection of Jesus to all who would hear them. The hand of the Lord was with them, a great multitude believed and turned to the Lord, and churches were planted all over Judea and Samaria.

It is highly probable that the disciples themselves regarded this storm of persecution as the greatest calamity that could have befallen them or the Church, and they doubtless turned away from their beloved city and sacred temple with heavy hearts and tearful eyes; yet the Lord was leading them in a way they knew not of, and opening to them fields of greater usefulness than Jerusalem with all its sacred associations could ever have offered to them. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled which says,—*"Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath*

shalt thou restrain." To the waves of human passion and Satanic malice, as well as to the sea, Jehovah says,—“Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”

The Church of God has no center on earth, and is not confined to any particular locality. The inhabited parts of the earth furnish the fields in which it labors and lives. It is always well with any church when the people of God are faithful to the high trust committed to them. All along the ages we see churches through various causes dying out in one region, yet at the same time, or soon afterward, we see other churches springing up in other regions with all the vigor and zeal of the first churches. It is a sad thing indeed, when churches die through the unfaithfulness of their members; but it is a matter of little importance comparatively for local churches to be broken up through the removal or dispersion of their members, provided the members themselves remain faithful, as it is only a change of one field of labor for another. It is true that in cases of this kind much is lost to the communities in which these churches were located; but as more is often gained in other communities than is lost in these, the Church as a whole does not suffer, but may be the gainer. And whenever the disciples of Jesus are driven out of any country, it is the country itself that suffers an irreparable loss, and not the Church.

Instead then of clinging in our affections to places, let us endeavor to stir up the people of God to an unremitting fidelity, that, wherever they may go, they may carry with them the light of the gospel; and that under whatever circumstances they may be placed, they will labor for the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints.

II. THE PREACHING OF PHILIP.

“And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ.” This statement pre-

sents both the agency of the preacher and the instrumentality of the truth. But in considering these means of conversion, we must not overlook the agency of the Holy Spirit. Philip was one of the seven described in the sixth chapter of Acts as "full of the Spirit and of wisdom," and when he spoke in the name of Jesus, he was evidently inspired. In addition to this the miracles that he performed were wrought through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit, however did not directly reveal the truth to the Samaritans, but addressed them through Philip, and thus brought the converting power of God to bear on their hearts and lives. In preaching unto them Jesus as the Christ, Philip necessarily unfolded and explained to them the whole plan of salvation so far at least as it relates to the conversion of sinners; and doubtless he set before them the Christian life, and the glory that is to be revealed when the Lord comes.

To preach Jesus as the Christ is to preach the gospel in all its fulness and finality, as it relates both to the sinner and the saint. In relation to the Christ personally, the following points are necessarily embraced:

- (1.) His divine nature;
- (2.) His official character;
- (3.) His sacrificial death;
- (4.) His burial and resurrection;
- (5.) His exaltation and intercession;
- (6.) His supreme Lordship;
- (7.) His judicial return.

Thus Peter preached the Christ to the Jews at Jerusalem, and to the Gentiles at Cæsarea. Thus Paul preached the Christ to the Greeks and the Romans, to the learned and the unlearned, to the bond and the free. And thus Philip preached the Christ to the Samaritans and to the Ethiopian treasurer. Hence, to preach Jesus as the Christ in the scriptural import of this expression, is to cover the

whole ground of human salvation, including all that God has done for man in connection with all things that are appointed for man himself to do.

III. THE HEED GIVEN TO THE THINGS SPOKEN.

“And the multitude gave heed with one accord to the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those who had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: And many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.” The first statement in this passage brings into prominent view the agency of sinners in their own conversion. As clearly shown in previous discourses, conversion is a turning of the sinner himself from the love and practice of sin to the love and service of God. Man is not wholly passive even in being born again. It is true that God himself begets, quickens, or makes alive. It is also true that He does this “with the word of truth;” and this Word of Truth the sinner himself must receive. This he does in the voluntary exercise of those powers of mind or heart with which God has endowed him.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God,” says John; but “he that believeth not shall be condemned,” says the Savior. Men can not be born again in unbelief, in impenitence, or in disobedience. And as man himself must believe, must repent, must obey the Lord, it follows conclusively that he has an agency, an important agency, an indispensable agency, in his own regeneration, conversion, and salvation. There is not an instance on record in which any man was ever born again, converted, or saved, without his own knowledge, or against his own consent.

The preaching of the gospel in any community, im-

poses a heavy responsibility on all who hear it, and also on all who have the opportunity to hear it, but refuse or neglect to do so. Whenever the gospel is preached to men, the means of salvation are brought within their own reach, and urged upon them for acceptance, and, if they are not saved, the failure is wholly on their part. Those who reject the gospel or simply neglect to receive and obey it, do, by this their voluntary action or course of life, put away from themselves the means of their own salvation. They are not converted because they will not turn to the Lord. They are not born again, because they will not receive the word of truth which God uses to beget men to a new life. They are not saved because they refuse to be saved in the Lord's way; and they can not be saved in any other way.

The Samaritans realized the responsibility imposed on them by the preaching of Philip. The gospel came to them claiming to be a message of love and mercy, and the last that would be offered to the human family. It came to them offering pardon for the past, peace for the present, and hope for the future. It was therefore due to themselves, due to Philip, and above all due to God, that they should examine this matter with a sincerity and earnestness befitting the great interests that were involved. Hence they gave heed to the things that were spoken by Philip, and closely observed the miracles that were wrought by him through the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation of all that he testified concerning Jesus.

It is said that the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians "in that they received the word in all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." The result was that many of them believed. On the other hand, those who would not hear, or hearing would not investigate the matter, did not believe. The Samaritans, like the Bereans, acted the nobler part,

and were therefore made to rejoice in what they saw and heard.

IV. THE CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF SIMON.

“But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria giving out that himself was some great one; to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great. And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries.” Simon was simply a shrewd impostor. By his cunning tricks and magical arts, he had completely bewildered the minds of the Samaritans, and had caused them to think that he was possessed of some supernatural power. In this way he had acquired great influence over them all.

When the people of any community have not the truth, or having the truth reject it, they are almost always ready to receive any delusion, however absurd or monstrous it may be. The Mormon delusion is an example on a large scale in our own time and country. Almost any mountebank who may come along, however gross and ignorant he may be, can gain a following. It is not then a matter of astonishment, that the Samaritans were deluded by the arts of Simon. The same thing could be repeated on a large scale in many cities of the present day.

V. THE SAMARITANS RECEIVED AND OBEYED THE GOSPEL.

“But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized, both men and women.” Here we have an example of the power of truth. Although Simon had for a long time held undisputed sway over their minds by his pretended sorceries, yet they were soon convinced of the truth of the gospel by what they saw and

heard. Magic arts and sleight-of-hand performances could not stand for an hour before the light and power of divine truth, confirmed by such signs and wonders as were performed through the hands of Philip. In the gospel of Christ, they found that which not only excited their wonder and gratified their curiosity, but that which met all their spiritual wants and satisfied the deepest yearning of their hearts. In it they found that which was in reality "the power of God" unto their own salvation.

While we have not even an outline of any of the discourses which were preached by Philip, we have the subject-matter of them all; and this is sufficient for all practical purposes. He "proclaimed unto them the Christ." He preached "good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ." All the spiritual blessings which are offered to men in the gospel are found in the kingdom of God. Salvation is in the name of Jesus, and in his name only. "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." The things to be believed in order to salvation are found in the glad tidings concerning Jesus and his love. These things constitute the subject-matter of all apostolic preaching and teaching. These are the things that enlighten our minds, purify our hearts, and turn us away from the world to live for God and heaven. These things the Samaritans believed; and when they believed, they were baptized both men and women.

There can be no question as to the fact that they believed the tidings spoken by Philip; nor can there be any question as to the additional fact that they who believed were baptized, both men and women. But what of their repentance? It is not so much as once mentioned in the entire history of the case. The Samaritans are now converted and saved, they are children of God and new crea-

tures in Christ, and yet Luke does not tell us either that they were commanded to repent, or that they did repent. Are we to infer from this that these Samaritans were brought into the Church of God and saved without repentance? This can not possibly be true. Where then do we find repentance in the history of this case of conversion? We find it beyond all doubt in the *Name* of Jesus. Just before He left the earth to enter heaven, Jesus said to His disciples that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in *His Name* among all nations, and, as Philip preached the things concerning the name of Jesus, he must have preached repentance. And as they believed the things spoken, which implies that they heartily accepted them, they were as a matter of course led to a deep and genuine repentance before God.

Not a word is said in this account of their conversion concerning the remission of sins; yet they were certainly brought into the enjoyment of this blessing. How do we know this? We know it from the fact that the Savior has inseparably connected the remission of sins with His name. As they believed in His name, as repentance was preached in His name, and as they were baptized in His name, so they received the remission of their sins in His name. The name of Jesus is the potential factor in the whole affair. His is *the name* which is above every other name; and there is salvation in none other.

Baptism is also connected with the name of Jesus; and wherever the apostles or the inspired evangelists preached the name of Jesus, they preached baptism in connection with His name as well as faith, repentance and the remission of sins. Whether these items are all specially mentioned or not in the history of any case of conversion, we must understand that they all entered into the conversion itself, each in its own place; for when men believed on the name of Jesus, they heartily received all that was taught

in His name concerning faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, comfort of the Holy Spirit, and hope of eternal life. To take Luke's history of conversions in any other way, is to make it a bundle of irreconcilable discrepancies and contradictions.

The simple statement that the Samaritans believed the things that were spoken concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus and were baptized, covers the whole ground of this conversion. In believing these things and being baptized, they turned to the Lord. In believing these things and being baptized, they were born again, and thus became children of God. In believing these things and being baptized, they were delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

VI. SIMON AMONG THE BELIEVERS.

"And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed." It has generally been assumed that Simon was not in reality a converted man at any time, and that his subsequent sin in offering to purchase the gift of God simply disclosed the hypocrisy under which he had been acting all the time. This assumption is urged with great confidence against the position held by the Disciples of Christ that baptism is a condition precedent to the personal enjoyment of the scriptural evidence of pardon. But if this assumption was true, it would prove entirely too much to be of any force in an argument concerning the design of baptism. The Disciples are and always have been as far as any people from believing or teaching that baptism alone converts a man,

or that the simple act of baptism brings the unbelieving or the impenitent into the enjoyment of any blessing. On the contrary, they teach distinctly and emphatically, and have always so taught, that unless the act of baptism is preceded and accompanied by a hearty faith in Jesus and a genuine repentance toward God, it is a nullity on the part of the church and the administrator, and a mockery on the part of the subject.

If Simon was not a true believer and a sincere penitent, then he was not a scriptural subject of baptism at all. His case therefore can have no bearing whatever on the design of baptism as held by the Disciples of Christ. If we deny that Simon was a truly penitent believer, then we invalidate his baptism. If we admit that he was a believer and truly penitent, then we establish not only the validity of his baptism, but also the reality of his conversion. The question then whether Simon was converted or not is to be decided by the fact of his belief or disbelief.

Luke emphasizes the fact that he believed: "Simon also himself believed." Simon himself—that very Simon who so long deluded the people and had been regarded as the great power of God—that identical old sorcerer, Simon himself believed. Not only is it said that Simon himself believed, but that Simon also believed. Also is an emphatic word as well as himself, and as such it identifies Simon's belief with that of the other Samaritans. If their belief of the things preached concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus was true faith, so was Simon's for he also himself believed.

It has been suggested that in Simon's case the element of repentance was wanting; but there is no authority whatever for this conclusion. It is a mere assumption. It is not stated, it is true, that Simon repented, nor is it stated that the other Samaritans repented. And if repentance is implied in the one case, it must necessarily be im-

plied in the other case; for the same terms are used in describing both.

It will not do to say that Simon only pretended to believe; for this would throw suspicion on every other statement in Luke's history. If Simon only pretended to believe when Luke says emphatically that "Simon also himself believed," may not the others have only pretended to believe. If we begin to guess at these things there will be no end to conjectures with reference to any and all facts mentioned in the Scriptures. If we can gloss over and explain away this unequivocal statement of Luke, we can gloss over and explain away any other statement that we may be unwilling to receive. Luke wrote this history some thirty years after these events occurred, and with a full knowledge doubtless of Simon's subsequent career; yet with all the facts before him he says, "And Simon also himself believed." Let others do as they may, as for myself, I accept Luke's statement against the world.

The Savior says positively and authoritatively, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Luke says that Simon himself believed and was baptized. The only conclusion to which I can come from these premises is that Simon was at that time a saved or pardoned man. But he afterward fell into sin through temptation, just as you or I or any other converted man may do; for we are all weak in some respects, and liable to go astray. This case, in this view of it, is full of warning to all, and of instruction to the erring. This however will be fully developed as we proceed.

VII. THE VISIT OF PETER AND JOHN.

"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they had come down,

prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet it had fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into the the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit." The special object of this visit of Peter and John seems to have been the impartation of the Holy Spirit unto these Samaritan believers. This power belonged to the apostles only, or at least in this instance it was a privilege reserved for them. Philip could preach the Christ to them, could work miracles in confirmation of the testimony which he delivered, could baptize those who believed, and instruct those who were baptized; but he could not impart the Holy Spirit to them through the laying on of his own hands.

This impartation of the Holy Spirit "through the laying on of the apostles hands" must be distinguished from that comfort of the Holy Spirit which is promised to all who believe in and obey the Savior. When the Samaritans believed the things preached by Philip and were baptized, they at once entered into the enjoyment of the remission of sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life. These blessings invariably follow a genuine scriptural conversion. But the extraordinary or miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit they had to receive through the ministration of the apostles. It was therefore no part of their conversion, but was a subsequent gift bestowed upon them to meet the wants of the church in that city.

Peter and John must return to Jerusalem, and Philip must soon leave them to preach the gospel to others; but they are not to be left as mere babes to contend against the powers of darkness in their own feeble strength. By this impartation of the Holy Spirit, the church at that place was endowed with all the spiritual gifts and helps that were necessary to promote its own growth, and enable it to meet the opposition that would certainly be hurled against

it. Wherever a church was planted, spiritual gifts were bestowed on some to enable them to take care of all the rest, and also to extend the work. This special impartation of the Holy Spirit ceased with the death of the apostles, being no longer necessary; but the Holy Spirit as a *Comforter* still abides in the Church and with all the saints, and will continue to abide till Jesus comes to take His ransomed ones home to abide with Him forever.

VIII. THE SIN OF SIMON.

“Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, “give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit.” The events recorded in the twenty-one verses which Luke gives to the work of Philip in the city of Samaria, did not occur in a day or a week. The labors of Philip in preaching, in performing so many wonderful works, and in baptizing those who believed, must have occupied considerable time—days at least, and perhaps weeks. After the baptism of Simon “he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed.” This again marks the lapse of time. It also required time for the report of these things to reach the church at Jerusalem and for Peter and John to come to Samaria; for although the distance was not great, the modes of travel were not as rapid in those days and that country as they are in these days and this country. Now mark the fact that during all this time not a word is said that reflects on the character of Simon as a true and faithful disciple. But after the arrival of Peter and John, and after he had witnessed the impartation of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of their hands, he fell into a very gross sin, an unholy desire leading him to offer money for the purchase of a divine gift.

When we consider Simon's previous character and occupation, it is not difficult to account for the fact that he sinned after he was baptized, nor for the particular sin which he committed. He had been a wonder-worker himself and had thriven by his occupation, as we are expressly told. Convinced by the preaching of Philip and the signs wrought in the confirmation thereof, he had renounced his magic arts and embraced the gospel of Christ. Continuing with Philip, he had been filled with wonder on beholding the miracles and signs that were done. And in addition to all these wonders, Peter and John coming down from Jerusalem simply pray and lay their hands on men, and they receive the Holy Spirit in gift-conferring power. Simon now sees that there is a wonder-working power in the Church which far surpasses anything of which he had ever had any knowledge or conception. Now is it any wonder that Satan, who tried Peter so severely should take advantage of these things and hurl his fiery darts at Simon? Like a skillful general, as he is, he always makes his attack at the weakest point, and here is the weak point in Simon's character. The desire to become a wonder-worker again, to be a great man in the Church as he had been out of it, takes possession of his heart; and as he had formerly made merchandise of his knowledge of sorcery, he now offers to purchase the power that he so earnestly covets.

The history of the Church, as well as our own observation of men, shows that whenever Christians go astray, they almost invariably fall into the same sins to which they were addicted before their conversion. The converted drunkard is in danger of going back to his cups; the gambler to his cards, the dancer to his revels; and so on of all other characters. It is in strict accordance with this tendency that the Jewish believers are warned against a relapse into Judaism, and the Gentile believers against a

relapse into Paganism, but never the reverse; for there was no danger that the Jews would fall into Paganism, or that the Gentiles would embrace Judaism. So it was through Simon's old habits, desires and trade that he was tempted; and yielding to the temptation, he sinned presumptuously. This seems to me so plain from the whole narrative that I wonder that any other view has ever been entertained.

IX. PETER'S REBUKE OF SIMON.

"But Peter said unto him, thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right before God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." *Thy silver perish with thee.* This does not mean that Simon was hopelessly doomed to perish, for if so, it was simply mockery to exhort him to repent of his sin and pray for its forgiveness, which Peter immediately did. It was a severe reproof, such as Simon deserved for thinking that the gift of God could be purchased with money. This offer of Simon betrays indeed a very low and sordid conception of the gospel, especially of the spiritual gifts connected with it; but this conception was in strict keeping with his previous life, and is not without a parallel in the history of other churches.

Some of the members of the church at Corinth fell into gross errors and indulged in shameful practices; yet Paul did not denounce them as hypocrites, but addressed them as brethren, pointed out their errors, and exhorted them to repent. He threw no suspicion on the reality of their conversion, not even in the case of the man who was living with his father's wife. He commanded the church to put this man away from them, but then on his repen-

tance he besought them to restore him. It was not this man's faith, or repentance, or baptism that was wrong, but it was his subsequent conduct in taking his father's wife to the shame of the church and the disgust of the world, that was wrong. He is therefore regarded and treated by Paul as an erring brother, and not as a presumptuous hypocrite who had never given his heart to the Lord. There were some in all the churches planted by the apostles who had taken only a single step out of Judaism or Paganism; and these were not able at a single bound to become full grown men and women in spiritual knowledge and discernment. There were also unruly and weak members in the churches then, as there are now. Hence the exhortation of Paul to the Thessalonians:—"Admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint hearted; support the weak, be long suffering towards all."

Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter. What matter?. Not the forgiveness of sins, but the power to impart the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. Simon did not offer to purchase the forgiveness of sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, or the hope of heaven; but "this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit." This then, and this only, was the matter of which Peter was speaking, and not any blessing that is common to the children of God. The other disciples of Samaria had just as little part or lot in this matter of imparting the Holy Spirit to others, as Simon had. This they doubtless realized, and hence they did not covet, or offer to purchase, this gift. The sin of Simon consisted in coveting a gift that God had bestowed on the apostles for a special purpose, and in offering to purchase the gift as though it were a matter of merchandise. Peter does not say that Simon's heart had never been right in the sight of God; but that it was not right at that time. It was not then right because of the sinful desire which Si-

mon had permitted to take possession of it. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right before God."

And now of what is Simon commanded to repent? Is he told to repent of all the sins of his past life, which had doubtless been many and great? Not at all. Is he rebuked for hypocrisy in imposing on Philip and connecting himself with the church? Not a word of it. He is rebuked for but one sin, commanded to repent of but one sin, and exhorted to seek the forgiveness of but one sin. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness"—the wickedness which he had just committed—"and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee." How plain and definite the language of the apostle, pointing to one sin which he had just committed in offering to purchase the gift of God! Now if Simon had never been converted, how can we explain the conduct of Peter in confining his rebuke and exhortation to this sin only?

But an objector will probably ask, "Does not Peter represent him as *yet* in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, implying that he had never been delivered from the bondage of sin." I must say with emphasis, he does not. He is often so quoted, but his statement does not read that way. It is a popular misquotation, founded on a popular misconception of the whole matter. Peter was not speaking of Simon's previous condition, but of his present condition when he said, "For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Not thou art *yet*, but thou art *now*, is the force of the expression. The marginal rendering is, "Thou wilt become a gall or a gall root, of bitterness and a bond of iniquity;" that is if you do not repent and seek forgiveness, you will fall into this dreadful condition.

But taking it that he was at that time in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, what placed him in

this sad state? Evidently and beyond all dispute, it was the gross sin that he had just committed, and the carnal desires he had permitted to take possession of his heart. The same may be said of any believer who falls into sin to the extent of the sin itself. Peter's heart was not right in the sight of God when he denied the Lord with an oath; nor was his conduct to be at all commended when he dissembled at Antioch. Yet on repenting he was forgiven. And if Simon repented and prayed to the Lord as he was exhorted to do, he also was forgiven.

X. SIMON'S REQUEST.

"And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me." This request is certainly a hopeful indication. I see no reason why we should doubt the sincerity of Simon in thus beseeching the apostles to pray for him. The request it seems to me, is one of deep earnestness, springing from a heart now sensible of its own sin in the matter, and trusting in the mercy of the Lord.

As to Simon's subsequent career, we have no reliable information. Many things, it is true, are related of him by the post-apostolic historians; but some of these things are so extremely absurd, and others so self-evidently false, that they throw suspicion on the whole. Our estimate of his religious character must be formed wholly from the narrative of Luke. The Holy Spirit in the few verses that we have passed in review has recorded all that is necessary for us to know concerning Simon, all indeed that we will ever be able to know until the day of judgment shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, and the last statement we have is favorable to his earnestness and sincerity.

If the view here taken of this matter is correct, then an important lesson is taught by it that is otherwise lost. This case of Simon not only shows the power of the gospel

on the one hand, and the power of old habits on the other, but it also sets before us the conditions of pardon to the erring Christian; and this, I think, is the special lesson which it was intended to inculcate. These conditions, as here presented, are repentance and prayer. Peter evidently regarded Simon as sustaining a relation to the Lord quite different from that which he sustained before his baptism.

According to the divine appointment it is by means of faith, repentance and baptism, that the alien is brought into the enjoyment of forgiveness as to all his past sins. His relation to God being changed by his conversion, if he should sin afterward as Simon did, in seeking forgiveness he does not approach the Father as an alien, but as an erring child. It is to meet this want that Christ is interceding for us at the right hand of God. "If any man sin," says John, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He also assures us that "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Hence it is through repentance, confession and prayer, that the Christian is to seek the forgiveness of those sins into which he may fall after he has turned to the Lord in faith and heartfelt obedience.

Let us then, as the children of God, never forget our gracious birth-right privileges. Let us ever remember that we have a great High Priest in the presence of the Father, who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, who was tempted in all points as are we, yet without sin, who is also able and willing to help us when we are tempted. Let us ever look to our *Advocate*, never forgetting that through Him the way is always open to return to our loving Heavenly Father, should we at any time be led astray.

By faith and obedience, we first come to Christ, and put our cause in His hands. He then becomes our *Advo-*

cate with the Father. By a life of obedience and prayer, we keep our cause in His hands; and so long as we let it remain there, it is safe beyond the reach of all harm. Instead then of condemning Simon as a hypocrite, and consigning him to final destruction, let us consider our own weakness, take warning from his early fall, and ever cling the more closely to Jesus.

“Alas! what hourly dangers rise!
What snares beset my way!
To Heaven, oh! let me lift my eyes,
And hourly watch and pray.

“How oft my mournful thoughts complain,
And melt in flowing tears!
My weak resistance, ah! how vain!
How strong my foes and fears!

“Oh gracious God! in whom I live,
My feeble efforts aid;
Help me to watch and pray and strive,
Though trembling and afraid.

“Increase my faith, increase my hope,
When foes and fears prevail;
And bear my fainting spirit up,
Or soon my strength will fail.

“Oh! keep me in the heavenly way,
And bid the tempter flee!
And let me never, never stray
From happiness and thee.”

Ninth Sermon.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN TREASURER. Acts
8:26-29.

This case is a striking exemplification of the whole subject of conversion as set forth in the first four sermons of this Series. All the facts of the case will be carefully considered in the order of their narration by Luke.

I. AN ANGEL SPEAKS UNTO PHILIP.

“But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza; the same is desert.”

This was an incident peculiar to the formative period of the Church. The agency of angels is not, and never has been, an established means for the conversion of sinners. In this instance the angel was not sent to the inquirer at all, did not appear to him or speak to him; nor did he bring any unseen, unheard, or mystical influence to bear upon him. The angel was sent to Philip, the preacher, the messenger of the Lord; and his work was done on Philip and not on the eunuch. Indeed there is no evidence that the eunuch ever knew that an angel of the Lord had ever spoken to Philip concerning himself. The message of the angel was to Philip only, and its sole object, so far as the record goes, was to send him off in that direction in which he would meet the inquiring treasurer. After what has been said in a preceding sermon concerning the appearance of an angel to Cornelius, it is not necessary to dwell longer on this incident. Suffice it to say that sinners should not look for spiritual illumination or comfort through the ministry of angels; and that the time has long since passed away when angels appeared to preachers to direct them in their labors.

II. THE INQUIRER APPEARS ON THE STAGE.

“And he arose and went; and behold a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem for to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.”

It matters not, so far as our present investigation is concerned, whether this man was a Jew or a Gentile. If a Jew, he was a devout son of Abraham, and an heir of the promises made unto the fathers. If a Gentile, he was a proselyte, and therefore a worshiper of the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob. The Psalmist said of the righteous man, “But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.” Such was the character and conduct of this man of Ethiopia. He had gone on a long, toilsome and dangerous journey that he might worship the only true God in the city of Jerusalem; and as he was returning he applied himself to the diligent study of the Scriptures. The very exercise in which he was engaged was a most favorable indication. His heart was prepared to receive the life-giving seed of the kingdom. It is not difficult to convince men of the truth and persuade them to obey the gospel, when they are engaged in the earnest study of the Scriptures. The great difficulty is to induce men to study the Bible at all; but when this difficulty is overcome, the battle is more than half won.

III. THE SPIRIT DIRECTS PHILIP.

“And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near and join thyself unto this chariot.” Here the agency of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the Ethiopian is presented to our consideration. The Spirit, however, did not in any mysterious or miraculous way enlighten the mind and

purify the heart of this inquiring reader of the Scriptures. It was through the agency of Philip and the instrumentality of the truth preached by him, that the converting power of the Holy Spirit was brought to bear on the soul of this man. The Holy Spirit in his superintending agency used subordinate agents even in that age of miracles in bringing the gospel, which is the medium of God's saving power, to bear on the hearts and lives of men.

The question as to the agencies and means by which God turns men from the love and service of sin to the love and practice of righteousness, is a question of fact and not of power; that is, it is a question as to what God actually does in converting men, and not as to what God could do under some imaginary state of affairs. The Holy Spirit could doubtless have inspired the Ethiopian in a moment of time with the full knowledge of the truth concerning the Messiah, just as easily as he inspired Philip; but it has not pleased God in His infinite wisdom to enlighten the minds of sinners by direct inspiration from on high in order to their own conversion. In all the past ages, it has pleased God to inspire only a few of His own servants, and through them to instruct the rest of the human family in the way of salvation. In this way has He chosen to reveal Himself, make known His will, and spread abroad His truth.

A few passages of Scripture bearing on this point may not be out of place. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Pet. 1:20, 21.) I understand this to mean that the prophets did not discover by their own powers of thought or reason the things that they foretold, but that God revealed these things to them directly by the Holy Spirit. "God, having of old time spoke unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions

and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." Heb. 1:1.) "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testify against them by thy Spirit in the prophets." (Nehemiah 6:30.) "But we received not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words, which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth combining spiritual things with spiritual words." (1 Cor. 2:12, 13.)

This work is none the less the work of the Holy Spirit, because it is done through chosen human agents. Whoever rejects the prophets and the apostles, rejects also the Holy Spirit. "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye." How did their fathers resist the Holy Spirit? Let Stephen himself answer. "Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them who showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers." (Acts 7:51, 52.) In the case now before us, the Spirit not only commanded Philip to go but also went with him, and remained with him putting thoughts into his mind and words into his mouth, dwelling in him, and exerting through him a personal influence on all to whom he spoke.

IV. PHILIP APPROACHES AND ADDRESSES THE ETHIOPIAN.

"And Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah, the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said how can I, except some man shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come and sit with him."

Here we behold the messenger whom the Lord sends to the thoughtful inquirer. Not an angel, not any myste-

rious visitant from the unseen world, but a man like himself stands before him, and propounds the significant question, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" The reply is equally significant:—"How can I, except some man shall guide me?" From Philip's question we learn that the gospel is addressed first to the understanding, and through the understanding it reaches, changes and controls the desires, affections, and purposes of the heart, and directs the whole course of life. From the reply we learn that God always uses His own chosen servants in imparting a knowledge of the truth to others. The Ethiopian was sufficiently versed in the Old Testament Scriptures to understand clearly that this was God's established method of approaching and moving men. Thus when Saul of Tarsus was called by the Lord himself to be the apostle of the Gentiles, he was required to go to Damascus, and there learn from Ananias the things which had been appointed for him to do.

V. THE SCRIPTURE HE WAS READING.

"Now the place of the Scripture which he was reading was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearers is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth;
In his humiliation his judgment was taken away;
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself or of some other?"

This passage foretells and describes the sufferings and death of the promised Messiah. But from the time of its utterance to the day of Pentecost, no one, not even Isaiah himself, or the disciples of Jesus, fully understood its import. That the prophets themselves did not fully understand

their own predictions concerning the sufferings and glorification of the coming Messiah is plainly asserted by Peter in the following passage:

“Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them, to whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things, which now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven; which things angels desire to look unto.” (I Pet. 1:10-12.)

It should not therefore be a matter of surprise that this man of Ethiopia did not know of whom the prophet was speaking. The Jews of that age were not condemned because they did not understand these prophecies before the Messiah came, but because they rejected Him when He did come and fulfill before their own eyes the prophecies concerning Himself. Jesus said unto them; “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.” “If I had not done among them the works which none others did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” (John 15:22-24.)

VI. PHILIP PREACHED UNTO HIM JESUS.

“And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture preached unto him Jesus.”

Luke did not deem it necessary to give us even a synopsis of Philip's discourse upon this beautiful and striking prophecy. He had already told how Peter preached Jesus to the multitude that came together on the day of Pentecost, again in the temple, and still again before the

council; how Stephen preached Him to the enraged crowd, and how this same Philip preached Him to the Samaritans. With all these facts before the minds of his readers, it was sufficient for Luke simply to state that he "preached unto him Jesus;" for this simple statement covers the whole ground.

Philip could preach Jesus only as Peter preached Him at the beginning; for the proclamation of mercy then made in the name of Jesus as the Christ was to go forth to all nations for the obedience of faith. Jesus commanded the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The gospel that was preached in Samaria was the same gospel that was preached in Jerusalem at the beginning; and was the only gospel that Philip could have preached with truth and authority to the eunuch. If Luke had given even a synopsis of every discourse to which he alludes, his narrative would have been full of needless repetitions; for, the subject-matter of apostolic preaching was always the same. In the light of what had already been written concerning the preaching of the apostles, no statement could have been more significant than the simple one that Philip from this Scripture preached unto him Jesus."

VII. WHAT IT IS TO PREACH JESUS.

Both to preacher and people, both to saint and sinner, this is a question of superlative importance. We may answer in one sentence:—That to preach Jesus is to make known the whole gospel plan of salvation, as it is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and fully revealed in the New. In this matter, the preaching and teaching of the apostles must be our guide. They preached Jesus through the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. To preach as they preached, is to preach Jesus. To preach in any other way, is not to preach Jesus. It is to be feared

that many preach *a* Jesus of their own conception instead of *the* Jesus of the New Testament. A correct analysis of the preaching of the apostles, and this alone, will furnish us with the only model of preaching Jesus.

(1.) To preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him, is to preach that He is *the Christ, the Son of the living God*; and thus set Him forth in the peerless rank and dignity of His *Divine Nature* and *Official Character*. To preach simply that Jesus was the model man, that He was a new starting point in the development of the race, that He was the greatest of all teachers is not to preach Him as the apostles preached Him; although these things are all true and important in their place. They constitute, however, but a small part of the truth concerning Jesus, and are powerless when separated from the other truths concerning His character and work, which are both vital and fundamental.

To Peter first, the Father revealed the personal dignity and official character of the Son of Mary; for when Jesus appealed from the hasty and unsatisfactory conclusions of the multitude to his own disciples for their own judgment concerning Himself, Peter promptly responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This, Jesus accepted as the truth concerning Himself, and declared that on this rock, this divinely-revealed and divinely-attested truth, He would build His Church against which the gates of *Hades* should not prevail. On the day of Pentecost, Peter boldly declared to the astonished multitude that God had made that same Jesus whom they had crucified both LORD and CHRIST. In his subsequent discourse in the temple, the apostle describes Him as the Holy and Righteous One, and as the Prince of Life. To the Gentiles at Cæsarea, he set Him forth in the same personal glory and official power. When Philip went down to the city of Samaria, he "proclaimed unto them the

Christ;" and when Paul had been with the disciples at Damascus certain days, after his return from Arabia doubtless, "straightway in the synagogue he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God."

That Jesus is the Savior of men grows out of the fact that He is the Son of God. The DIVINITY of Jesus is the ROCK on which the CHURCH of God is built. The *divinity* of Jesus is the impregnable foundation of the whole scheme of redemption. The *divinity* of Jesus is the chief corner stone of the Christian temple. The *divinity* of Jesus is the great vital and vitalizing truth of the gospel. The death, the burial, the resurrection, and the mediation of Jesus all derive their power to purify and bless, to save and glorify the sons and daughters of men from His *divinity*. Rob the gospel of the *divinity* of Jesus, and you rob it of its regenerating power. He then who would preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him, must preach Him in His official character as the promised Messiah, and in His personal dignity as the only-begotten and well-beloved Son of the living God.

(2.) To preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him, is to preach that He died for our sins and rose again for our justification; and thus set Him forth as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

As Jesus is the only begotten of the Father, it follows that His death is the only sufficient sacrifice for sin that has ever been made. All the sacrificial offerings of all the preceding ages, though made by divine authority, were only types of this final offering of God's Son. With reference to other and previous offerings, Paul says, "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin." With reference to the offering of Jesus, he says, "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." (Heb. 10:4-14.) With reference to our redemption Peter says, "Knowing that ye were re-

deemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ; who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory; so that faith and hope might be in God." (I Pet. 1:18-21.)

When Paul would assail the idolatry and sinfulness of the learned and polished, but deeply corrupt Corinthians, he brought not to his aid the wisdom of the philosopher, or the arts of the orator; but relied wholly on the power of the CROSS deeming this both the power and the wisdom of God in order to the salvation of men. "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the mystery of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2.)

The resurrection of Jesus is inseparably connected with His death in the preaching of the apostles. His resurrection was a declaration on the part of God of His *Royal Sonship*, and a manifestation of His *Supreme Divinity*. It is also a pledge of the resurrection of all the dead, and the assurance of eternal life to all who live and die in Jesus. As the death of Jesus is the only all-availing sacrifice for sin, so the resurrection of Jesus is the only triumph that has ever been achieved over death and the grave.

The divinity of Jesus being established, as it was by the testimony of the Father, of the Scriptures, and of His works, His death and resurrection constitute the very heart of the gospel. Paul in writing to the Corinthians reminds them of the gospel which he had preached to them, by which also they were saved unless they had believed in vain—"For I delivered unto you first of all that which

also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then He appeared to above five hundred at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all as to the child untimely born, He appeared to me also." (1 Cor. 15: 3-9.) Never did any apostle or inspired evangelist preach to sinners without preaching the death, the burial and resurrection of Jesus. "So we preach," says Paul, "and so ye believed."

(3.) To preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him, is to preach that He was exalted by the right hand of God, and invested with all authority in heaven and on earth; and thus set Him forth in His *Supreme Lordship*.

The death and resurrection of Jesus were followed by His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, and entrance on His mediatorial reign. As the forty days which intervened between His resurrection and ascension were drawing to a close, He said to His chosen apostles, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," or "the consummation of the age." Having suffered all that Satan and wicked men could inflict upon Him, He was now ready to be glorified; for the prophets had showed beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.

Having made an all-sufficient and final offering for sin, having triumphed over *Hades* and the grave, it now follows that repentance and remission of sins are henceforth to be preached in His name and among all nations,

beginning at Jerusalem. But this proclamation could not be made in the name of Jesus as the Christ until He was actually glorified. Hence He required the apostles to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. When He had met with them for the last time on earth, He said unto them, "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The time for His departure had now come; "for when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. (Acts 1:8-9.)

On the day of Pentecost, the promised power came. The apostles then knew that Jesus had taken His seat at the right hand of the Father; and from that time onward they preached through Him, as the Christ crucified and glorified, the forgiveness of sins. In connection with His divine character, sacrificial death, triumphant resurrection, and high-priestly intercession, they always preached His *Supreme Lordship*, declaring that men must believe on Him, repent of all their sins, confess Him as their Savior and be baptized by His authority into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Never did they offer the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom to the unbelieving, the impenitent, or the disobedient; but to all those who in faith, repentance and baptism, received and acknowledged the Supreme Lordship of Jesus, they promised the forgiveness of all past sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life.

(4.) To preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him, is to preach that He will come again to raise the dead, to immortalize and glorify His saints, and to banish His enemies forever; and thus set Him forth as the *Judge* both of the living and the dead.

While the wonder-stricken disciples were gazing up into heaven after their ascending Lord, "two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." When He was "received up in glory," the Father said unto Him, "Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies the foot-stool of thy feet."

To a Jewish audience Peter said: "Repent ye therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; whom the heaven must receive until the time of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets that have been from of old." (Acts 3:18-21.)

To a Gentile audience the same apostle said: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. And He charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is He who is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." (Acts 20:40-42.)

In allusion to the preceding ages of Pagan darkness, Paul said, "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent; inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance to all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30-31.)

To the Thessalonians Paul writes; "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the

voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (Thess. 4:16-17.) Again to the same people he writes, "And to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and marveled at in all them that believed (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess. 1:7-10.)

Thus the apostles preached Jesus:—

- (1.) As the Son of the Living God;
- (2.) As the Lamb for sinners slain;
- (3.) As the Lord of heaven and earth;
- (4.) As the Judge of the living and the dead.

Thus they presented Him to the wondering gaze of the world:—

- (1.) In the Royal Dignity of His Person;
- (2.) In the Humiliation of the Cross;
- (3.) In the Triumph of His Resurrection;
- (4.) In the Glory of His Exultation;
- (5.) In the Grace of His Intercession;
- (6.) In the Supremacy of His Mediatorial Reign;
- (7.) In the Judicial Power of His Second Coming.

To reject any of these is fatal error.

He preached unto him Jesus. How comprehensive and sublime the theme! Jesus—the subject of Old Testament prophecy, and the hero of New Testament history! Jesus—the object of the sinner's faith, and the ground of the saint's hope! Jesus—the great central figure in the

history of the world! The ages themselves have been arranged with reference to Him, and in their sublime march are developing His power and glory. Jesus in His peerless grandeur is the noblest theme that has ever enlisted the tongue of the orator or the pen of the historian. The skill of the artist and the genius of the poet have alike failed to portray the divine condescension and exalted meekness that brought Him so near, and yet elevated Him so far above all other men.

Jesus! Prophets preached Him; angels preached Him; apostles preached Him; inspired evangelists preached Him; and, having been acknowledged by the Father, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by the messengers, witnessed unto the world and received up into glory, faithful men will continue to preach Him until He himself shall come in judgment to close the gospel age and introduce his everlasting kingdom. And then while the saints with rapture sing the song of redemption, the angelic hosts in wonder will chant the chorus of His praise.

“Hark! the thrilling symphonies
Seems, methinks, to seize us;
Join we too the holy lays,
Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!
Sweetest sound in seraph’s song,
Sweetest note on mortal tongue,
Sweetest carol ever sung—
Jesus! Jesus! flows along.”

VIII. THE EUNUCH DEMANDS BAPTISM.

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

Here arises a question of much practical importance. How did this man know that it was his duty to be baptized at all? There was nothing about baptism in the prophecy he was reading. Indeed, there was nothing

about Christian baptism in the Old Testament; for, as all concede, Christian baptism is a New Testament institution. How then could he know anything concerning this ordinance? There can be but one answer to this question. He must have learned from the discourse of Philip that it was his immediate duty to be baptized. This is the only answer that can be drawn from all the facts of the case.

In preaching Jesus to him, Philip made known, not only what Jesus had done for him, but also what Jesus required him to do. There is no exception to this in all the preaching of the apostles and their co-laborers. Unless, therefore, we teach men that they must believe on Jesus as God's Son and their own Savior, that they must truly repent of all their sins, and that they must be baptized in the name of Jesus; we do not preach Jesus as the apostles preached Him. The preacher who omits baptism lays violent hands on God's word, suppresses part of the truth, and sets aside the authority of Jesus as Lord of all. Let all remember then, that the preaching of Jesus, as the Savior of sinners, in accordance with the commission and apostolic practice, has baptism in it; and loyalty to Him and to the truth requires that it should be faithfully preached and lovingly observed, as well as faith and repentance.

The instrumentality of the truth is also strikingly exemplified in this case of conversion. By means of the truth concerning Jesus, the eunuch's mind is at once enlightened; his views, desires, expectations and hopes, are all changed; and he is made willing and anxious to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, and enter at once into the kingdom of grace. He waits not to be urged or entreated; but the very moment an opportunity presents itself, he demands baptism at the hands of his teacher.

What a contrast between the conduct of this man of Ethiopia and that of many of the present day! I fear that

in many cases the contrast between the preaching heard then, and that heard now, is equally great. The preaching heard then, led this man to exclaim at the first opportunity, "Behold, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized!" The preaching often heard now, leads men to think and say that it is a matter of very little importance whether they are baptized at all or not. Which is right, and therefore safe, I need not say; for all know that the apostolic way is the only right and safe way.

IX. THE DISPUTED PASSAGE.

"And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said; I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

This verse, although found in some ancient authorities, is wanting in the oldest manuscripts, and is regarded by almost all scholars as an interpolation. In the Revised Testament, it is omitted from the text, but inserted in the margin. More than sixty years ago it was omitted by Mr. Campbell from the revised edition of the translations of George Campbell, McKnight and Doddridge. Although it may be an interpolation, it is an ancient one, and it shows clearly what the practice of the Church was when it was inserted. It was probably first written in the margin by some copyist as an explanation, and afterward placed in the text by some other copyist. Although its omission leaves the earnest question of the eunuch unanswered so far as the record goes, and seems to make a hiatus in the narrative; yet we do not in reality lose anything by losing this verse from the text, for the same vital truth is abundantly taught in many passages which have never been disputed.

The absolute necessity of a heartfelt faith in Jesus as the Christ, on the part of all to whom the gospel is ad-

dressed, is prominently presented in all the discourses and letters of the apostles. Jesus himself demanded of His disciples an avowal of their faith in Him; and when Peter responded, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," He accepted it as a full statement of His official character and personal dignity. The grand fundamental Truth thus avowed by Peter is the Rock on which Jesus declared He would build His Church; and if the Church as a whole, as a divine institution, is founded on the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus, then every one who seeks admission into this divine institution must take his stand on the same immovable foundation.

All admit that in the case of responsible persons, faith in Christ, and repentance toward God are indispensable prerequisites to Christian baptism. This being so, a confession or avowal of this faith and repentance must be required; for without such an avowal neither preachers nor churches would have any means of ascertaining whether the candidate in any case is a scriptural subject of baptism or not. Paul says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." To Timothy he writes, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called, and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses." On the day of Pentecost, "they then that received the word were baptized;" and this reception of the word must have been made known in some way. When the Samaritans "believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized both men and women. Their faith must have been expressed in some way, or Philip would not have known who desired to be baptized. This passage then—the 37th verse—whether written by Luke or interpolated by some other hand, both expresses and implies important truths and

facts that are clearly taught in many other passages, the genuineness of which cannot be questioned.

To say, "If thou believest with thine heart, thou mayest;" is also to say by implication, "if thou believest not, thou mayest not." For an unbelieving and impenitent man to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus would be an impious mockery of a divine institution and an insult to the mercy of God. Indeed, such a man cannot be truly baptized in the name of the Lord. "In the name of" means "by the authority of;" and the Lord never authorized the baptism of such a character. We may go through the form, and the name of the Lord may be pronounced; but the baptism which the Lord authorized is not there, unless the preparation of heart and life is there. The confession here put into the mouth of the eunuch, though brief, is nevertheless comprehensive. It necessarily involves the heartfelt acceptance of the whole scheme of redemption as revealed in the Bible. If the proposition that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God," is true, then the Bible is true, and the religion that is developed in it, is a glorious reality. But if this proposition is false, then the Bible is false, and its religion a delusion.

The very existence, then, of a revealed religion depends on the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. If He was not the Christ, the Son of God, then man is without a Savior, and can have no hope in the hour of death. But if Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ the Son of the living God, the power of death has been broken, the gates of *Hades* have been carried in triumph, and a bright and glorious immortality has been secured to the children of God.

X. THE EUNUCH IS BAPTIZED.

"And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and

they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

It has been said that we cannot determine with certainty from this statement whether Philip baptized the eunuch, or the eunuch baptized Philip. I sincerely pity the mind that is in such a strait as this. Can we determine from the entire narrative, which was the teacher and which the inquirer? Which was the preacher and which was the hearer? Indeed, can we be mistaken with reference to this matter? It is plainly declared that Philip preached to the eunuch. Is it customary for preachers to baptize their converts, or for converts to baptize their preachers? Was ever such an occurrence heard of, as that of a convert baptizing the preacher by whom he had been led to the acknowledgment of the truth? I need not pause to answer these questions. But again, was it Philip or the eunuch who asked to be baptized? The answer to this settles the question. It is saddening, indeed, to think of the pitiful quibbles to which some men will resort in order to evade the obligation of a known duty.

I will not here raise the question concerning the *action*, or as it is usually called, the *mode* of baptism. This will constitute a separate sermon at the close of the series. The point that we now wish to emphasize is this, that when this devout student of the Old Testament Scriptures was convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, he at once acknowledged His supreme authority and submitted to His divine government. There was no hesitation on the part of either Philip or the eunuch, no delay for the purpose of calling a church council together to hear the experience of the eunuch and decide whether he was a fit subject for baptism or not, no putting off for a more convenient season. The eunuch doubtless felt that "Now is the acceptable time," that "To-day is the day of salvation," and hence he gladly entered at once on the pathway of obedience.

In this he set an example that all truly penitent persons should willingly follow.

XI. THE JOY RESULTING.

“And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.”

Here we have an exemplification of the divine law of happiness which was laid down by the Savior himself in these words, “If ye know these things, happy are ye, if ye do them.” First, a knowledge of what God requires; second, doing the same from the heart; and third, happiness as the invariable result. This is the divinely-established order which cannot be reversed. In all the dispensations of God’s mercy, obedience—penitent, loving, trusting obedience—to the requirements of God, has been to men the great condition of satisfying joy and sustaining hope.

This man of Ethiopia has now found that ONE of whom Moses and the prophets did write, that ONE through whom alone is preached the forgiveness of sins, that ONE in whose name only is there salvation. Weary and heavy laden, he takes upon himself the yoke of his loving Savior, and finds rest unto his soul. Here the inspired historian leaves him and he goes on his way rejoicing. Happy man! Thrice happy man! Happy in the forgiveness of all past sins! Happy in the comfort of the Holy Spirit! Happy in the hope of eternal life!

Friendly hearers, are you inquiring after the way of life and salvation? If so, then let the prophets and the apostles lead you to the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Learn of Him, take His yoke upon you, and you will find rest to your sin-burdened souls. Then

you also may go on your way rejoicing in the hope of endless happiness beyond the grave.

“To-day the Savior calls,
Ye wanderers, Come:
O, ye benighted souls,
Why longer roam?

To-day the Savior calls;
O, hear Him now;
Within these sacred walls
To Jesus bow.

To-day the Savior calls;
For refuge fly;
The storm of vengeance falls,
And death is nigh.

The Spirit calls to-day;
Yield to his power;
O, grieve Him not away;
’Tis mercy’s hour.”

Tenth Sermon.

THE CONVERSION OF THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.—Acts
16: 25-34

The conversion of the “man of Ethiopia,” who had been up to Jerusalem to worship, illustrates the power of the gospel in leading a devout and truth seeking student of the Old Testament to the One of whom Moses and the prophets did write, and who was “the end of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth.” The conversion of the Philippian jailer, on the other hand, illustrates the power of the same gospel in turning a Gentile away from his idol to the service of the living and true God.

With reference to their previous opportunities and relationship to God, and perhaps also in their personal character, the treasurer of Queen Candace and the jailer of Philippi differed widely; but the means of their salvation were one and the same. To the former, Philip preached Jesus as the suffering Lamb of whom Isaiah wrote; to the latter, Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord as the means of salvation to all who receive it.

To the brief narrative found in the sixteenth chapter of the Acts of Apostles, we are indebted for all that we can ever know with reference to this case of conversion. Let us therefore carefully examine all the facts here related, and compare them with the items here given in the Commission, and the facts stated in other cases of conversion.

I. PAUL AND SILAS IMPRISONED.

These faithful servants of the Lord in their missionary tour through Macedonia, had reached the city of Philippi; and after abiding there for some days, they went out of the

city on the Sabbath to the river side, where they "supposed there was a place of prayer," and "they sat down, and spake unto the women who were come together." This resulted in the conversion of Lydia and her household; and after the baptism, at her earnest solicitation, Paul and Silas took up their abode in her house.

While there it came to pass as they were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met them, and following them cried out, saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation." This she did for many days, until Paul turned upon her, and in the name of Jesus Christ cast out the evil spirit. Her master seeing that the hope of their gain was gone, they were so enraged against Paul and Silas that they laid violent hands on them, dragged them before the rulers of the city, and accused them as Jews of troubling the city, and setting forth customs which the Philippians as Romans could not lawfully observe. The magistrates lent a willing ear to these false accusations; the multitude rose up against them; and without any legal investigation of the matter, these unworthy magistrates commanded that they should be beaten with rods.

"And when they had laid many stripes upon them they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

As the Lord makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the residue of wrath He restrains, it came to pass that this unjust and cruel conduct on the part of their accusers and of the multitude and the magistrates, led in the providence of God to the conversion of the jailer and his household, to the vindication of Paul and Silas, and the wider dissemination of the truth.

II. PRAYER AND PRAISE IN THE INNER PRISON.

“But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them.”

The body may be imprisoned; but the soul can neither be confined within walls, nor bound with chains. The feet may be fettered, but the thoughts fly like swift-winged arrows to the angels' home beyond the skies. The dungeon may throw its more than midnight darkness over the natural vision, and shut from mortal ears the groans and cries of tortured humanity; but the light of divine mercy will shed a halo of glory around the soul; and the murmured prayer or the suppressed sigh, will be heard, as if in tones of thunder, at the throne of God. Although the bodies of Paul and Silas are bathed in their own blood, their hearts are full of comfort, hope and joy. They regard it as an honor that they are accounted worthy to suffer persecution for the sake of Him who died for them. While on earth, Jesus said to His disciples, “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” This happiness Paul and Silas now realize, finding it a well-spring of joy in that night of darkness and pain.

Neither the Roman empire, nor all the powers of darkness, could pluck this joy from their hearts. They are happy in spite of all that Satanic malice can devise, or human power can inflict. Their hearts are filled to overflowing and their joy breaks forth in prayers of thankfulness and songs of rejoicing. With what strange and thrilling emotions must the other prisoners have listened! for such prayers and songs had never before been heard

before within those gloomy walls. Nor did the prisoners alone hear them, but God also; and in the quaking earth He dispatched a swift messenger for their relief.

III. THE EARTHQUAKE.

“And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were loosened.”

Every heart was doubtless made to quail with terror, and every cheek was paled with deadly fear, excepting only Paul and Silas who in the mighty power that shook the earth recognized their Father's hand; and in His love they felt secure.

“And the jailer being roused out of sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.”

Knowing that he would be held to a strict accountability for their safe keeping, and deeming it to be impossible for him to give an account of their escape that would be satisfactory to the magistrates and the people, he feared to face the consequences, and deemed it more honorable to die by his own hands than by the hands of the executioner. But his fears were entirely groundless. The prisoners were all there. The HAND that closed the lion's mouth when Daniel was cast into their den, and that shielded the Hebrew children when they were cast into the fiery furnace, was laid on every man in the prison; and not one had dared to move. Indeed we doubt, if even the thought of escape had entered any mind. All were held by an unseen but irresistible power. As the jailer in utter ignorance of all this is about to fall on his own sword, Paul cries out saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here.” This assures him of the safe-keeping of his entire charge, and stays his suicidal hand.

IV. THE JAILER'S ANXIOUS INQUIRY.

“And he called for lights, and sprang in, and trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved.

Saved from what? Not from Roman punishment, as some have strngely conjectured, for, as the prisoners are all safe, he is in no danger of punishment from the civil authorities. All fear of the government must have vanished when Paul said, “We are all here.” So far as the magistrates are concerned, all he has to do is to close the doors and turn the keys, and all will still be well.

Why then does he tremble? Why does he fall at the feet of these scorned and scourged Jewish prisoners? Why does he bring them out into his own house, and say to them, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Ah! it is a new fear that has seized his heart. It is a power infinitely greater than the Roman government, before which he now trembles. It is punishment immeasurably greater than that of the sword, which he now dreads. It is the consciousness of sin and guilt, that now strikes terror to his heart.

We should not forget that Paul and Silas had been in the city for many days, had gone out and in daily, had spoken publicly at the river side, had baptized Lydia and her household, had been dragged before the magistrate, and beaten in the presence of the multitude, all of which it is hardly possible that the jailer could have been ignorant. It is highly probable, however, that up to the very moment in which Paul prevented him from taking his own life, he had felt no interest whatever in them or their preaching; yet of both he must have had some knowledge. While he may have regarded them as adventurers, or as wicked impostors; yet he must have known something of them as the earnest proclaimers of what the Philippians regarded as a new religion.

And now by the wonderful events of that midnight hour, his mind is quickened into its highest activity, and his heart is stirred to its very depths. He thinks fast; but he thinks to the point. He reasons with lightning like rapidity; but his conclusions are wonderfully correct. He feels that the issue of life and death, both for time and eternity, is at stake; and he feels aright. He looks upon the earthquake as the finger of God pointing to Paul and Silas as the messengers of life and salvation; and in this he is not mistaken. It was therefore the deep conviction of his own sinfulness and the firm persuasion that Paul and Silas had a message from God, that drew from his heart the earnest, anxious inquiry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This question under all the circumstances must have referred to salvation from sin, from its guilt and condemnation, from its dominion and penalty. This is the question of questions to all men of every age. This question should be the burden of every heart until it is answered in the full assurance of pardon and the well founded hope of heaven.

V. THE ANSWER OF PAUL AND SILAS.

"And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

In this brief response they presented Jesus to him as the Savior of sinners. They did not, however, demand faith of him without submitting the evidence on which faith in Jesus must ever rest. It is by no means a blind, unreasoning trust in Jesus that the gospel requires, but an intelligent conviction that the things preached concerning Him are true; and this conviction cannot be produced without satisfactory evidence.

Jesus himself, while on earth, did not ask any one to believe on Him without the most conclusive evidence. Hence in support of His own claims, He presented (1)

the testimony of John the Baptist, (2) the testimony of the Scriptures, (3) the testimony of His own works, and (4) the testimony of the Father, as the all-sufficient basis of the most undoubting faith in Him. In addition to these we have (1) the subsequent testimony of the Holy Spirit, (2) the testimony of the apostles, and (3) the testimony of the ages since the day of Pentecost.

Paul declares that belief or faith comes of or by hearing, that is by the message heard, the report of the witnesses, as the word which is rendered hearing implies; and this hearing, that is, report or testimony, comes through the word of God." So it was in the case of the Philippian jailer; and also in all other cases of conversion under the ministry of the apostles. Paul and Silas having required him to believe on the Lord Jesus, proceeded at once to lay before his mind the facts concerning Jesus which must be believed, and the evidence by which these facts are sustained.

VI. THE DISCOURSE OF PAUL AND SILAS.

"And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house."

This single remark is all that is said concerning the entire discourse; yet it is all that was necessary to be said, when it is taken in connection with all the facts which Luke had already related concerning other cases of conversion. "The word of the Lord" which they spoke to the jailer was simply the gospel of Christ in all its truths, facts, precepts, promises and threatenings. This is simply indisputable; and I need not dwell upon it.

That Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah—that He died as an offering for sin, was buried, and rose again—that He authorized His chosen apostles to preach repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem—that He was exalted by

the right hand of the Father where He ever lives to intercede for us—and that He will come again in power and great glory—these are the leading facts that must have been presented to the jailer and all that were in his house; for to speak the Word of the Lord to inquiring sinners, is to preach the gospel as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

VII. THE EFFECT OF THE DISCOURSE.

“And he took them at the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.”

How did he learn that it was his duty to be baptized? There can be but one answer to this; and that answer is found in the single statement that they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. They all learned that it was their duty to be baptized from the Word of the Lord; for this they heard, this they received, and this they obeyed.

The *Word of the Lord*, as used in the New Testament, includes not only what God has done in and through Christ in providing and revealing the means of salvation; but also what He requires men to do in order to the personal enjoyment of this salvation.

The *Word of the Lord* sets forth the love of the Father, the sacrificial offering and priestly intercession of the Son, the ministration of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of the apostles, as the great means and agencies of man's salvation.

The *Word of the Lord* requires of the alien faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance toward God, and baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, as conditions preparatory to the enjoyment of the blessings found in the Church or Kingdom of Christ on earth.

The *Word of the Lord* promises to all who thus come to Him in faith, penitence, and obedience, the remission of all past sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life.

The *Word of the Lord* requires of all who receive it and obey it, the hearty observance of all things commanded by Jesus or instituted by the apostles, the diligent cultivation of the Christian character, and a faithful continuance in well doing to the end of life, as a preparation for the joys of the life that is to come.

The *Word of the Lord* promises to all who hold out faithful unto death the abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and the possession of "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It is therefore "by faithful continuance in well doing, seeking for glory, honor, and immortality," that we are prepared for, and assured of, eternal life.

The jailer and his household received the *Word of the Lord*, as it was spoken by Paul and Silas; and in doing this they accepted most heartily all that the Lord had done for them, and faithfully observed all that He required of them. There was no hesitation or procrastination on the part of the jailer and his household. They did not postpone their submission to the Lord to the next week, or even the next day, but were baptized the same hour of the night. But why were they baptized at all? Evidently, because the Lord required it. How did they learn this? From the *Word of the Lord* which was spoken by Paul and Silas; for they had no other source of information.

That all who believe in Jesus and repent of their sins should be baptized by the authority of Christ into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, is a part of the *Word of the Lord* that went forth out of Jerusalem unto all the nations. It may be a very small part,

even the very least part, for aught I know to the contrary; still it is a part, and will ever remain a part of the *Word of the Lord*, the *Gospel of our salvation*. As such no faithful man ever did, or ever will, leave it out of the message which God sends to the inquiring alien. In the conduct of the jailer and his household, we have a manifestation of their heroic faith and genuine repentance, as well as of their hearty obedience.

VIII. WHERE WERE THEY BAPTIZED?

The precise place we know not, and can never know till we meet them in heaven; but there is one thing of which we may be well assured, and that is, they were not baptized in the jailer's house. The facts stated by Luke place this beyond all question.

First Fact—the jailer “brought them out” of the inner prison before he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” *Second Fact*—“they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house.” In bringing them out of the inner prison then, he brought them into his own house; for otherwise the discourse could not have been delivered “in his house,” as Luke says it was. *Third Fact*—“he took them” to some place, where he washed their stripes and was baptized, “he and all hls.” *Fourth Fact*—after the baptism, “he brought them up into his house,” from which he had taken them.

As he could not have brought them up into his house, unless they had been taken out of it, and as they were “in his house” when the word of the Lord was spoken to them, it follows irresistibly that when “he took them” to the place where he “washed their stripes and was baptized,” he must have taken them out of his house; for they were out when they were baptized, and had to be brought into his house to be in it again.

To what precise spot he took them, the Lord only

knows. He may have taken them to the river that flowed hard by, at the side of which they had already preached the gospel to the women who resorted thither for prayer, and in which it is probable that Lydia and her household had been baptized. Or he may have taken them to some public pool in the city, or to his own private bath. With reference to this point the history of the case says nothing; and on this point I affirm nothing. He must have taken them to some place where there was water enough to wash or bathe their beaten bodies and in which he and his could be baptized. It matters not however, where that place was. The question as to what baptism is must be settled on other grounds. Whatever baptism was in the days of the apostles, to that they submitted, and submitted at once; and whatever was baptism then, that and that alone is baptism now.

IX. THE JOY WHICH FOLLOWED.

“And he brought them up into his house and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house having believed in God.”

How plain and pointed every sentence in the entire narrative? Though brief, it contains a wonderful amount of information. Paul and Silas spoke the *Word of the Lord* to all that were in the jailer's house. Then he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his immediately. Then he rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God. All the jailer's house are associated with him in hearing, in believing, in being baptized, and in rejoicing. We find in all this a perfect agreement with the *Rule of Conversion* laid down in the *Great Commission* as reported by Mark.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believ-

eth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Here we have, first, the gospel preached and heard; second, belief of the gospel which involves a living faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and the only Savior of men; third, baptism in obedience to the gospel which is simply a heartfelt submission to the authority of Jesus; and fourth, the enjoyment of the salvation promised in the gospel. Now in the case of the jailer, first, "they spake the *Word of the Lord* unto him, with all that were in his house," that is they preached the gospel to all that were in the house; second, he believed in God with all his house, for the expression, "having believed in God," shows that the faith came in before the baptism; third, they were all baptized the same hour of the night; fourth, they all rejoiced in the enjoyment of the promised salvation from guilt and condemnation.

On examining other cases of conversion, we find them all agreeing like this with the *Commission*, and of course with each other, in everything that is a part of conversion at all. In all cases, the gospel was preached as the seed of the kingdom, and as the medium through which God's converting power reaches the heart and controls the life; and in all cases men heard, believed, repented, were baptized, and went on their way rejoicing.

Rightly understood, Paul and Silas cover the whole ground of the alien's duty, when they say to the jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." He and all his house were to be saved on the same conditions, for religion is a personal matter, and no one can be saved on the faith of another. Every one must believe on Jesus for himself, and then act for himself; for every one must give account of himself unto the Lord. The whole discourse was simply a development

of the admonition, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

X. WHAT IS IT TO BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS?

This is an all important question, and should therefore be clearly understood by all who are inquiring after the way of life. We may believe many things concerning Jesus, things that are true and important in themselves; and yet not believe on Him as our Savior. Skeptics, and infidels, and even blasphemers, believe many things concerning Jesus, and yet they do not believe on Him in the full scriptural sense of this requirement. That Jesus lived, that He claimed to be the Christ, that He was rejected and crucified, that in the Gospels we have a record of His teaching, that the Church is founded on Him, and that Christianity takes its name from Him, are all facts which no intelligent man, Jew or Gentile, will deny. Jews believe all these things, and yet they do not believe on Him as the Christ. Other men may and do believe all these things; and yet they do not believe on Him as their Savior. Some men go farther than this and teach that He was the model man, that He was the greatest of all teachers, that He died as a martyr to the truth He taught, that He introduced a new era into the history of the world and the development of the race; and yet they deny His divinity, reject His bodily resurrection from the dead, and per consequence His mediatorial reign at the right hand of the Father. They can not therefore, look for Him to come again to raise the dead and judge the world. They believe a part of the testimony concerning Jesus, but reject the testimony concerning those facts which constitute Him the Light of the world and the Savior of men. Therefore, they do not believe on Him.

No impenitent or disobedient man fully believes on the Lord Jesus Christ; for if he did he would not remain

impenitent or disobedient. The faith in Jesus, which the gospel requires, is a living, active principle that works by love purifies the heart, reforms the life and brings the whole man into subjection to the authority of the Savior. It is a faith which does not say, "What good will baptism do me? Can't I be saved without it?" but which says from the heart, and with all the heart, "Here Lord I give myself away; 'tis all that I can do." We must believe then, not only that Jesus lived and taught, but also that He was indeed and in truth the Christ, the Son of God; and that His teaching therefore, was with divine authority. We must believe, not only that He died as a martyr to the truth which He taught, but also as a sacrifice for our sins; and therefore that His blood only can cleanse us from guilt. We must believe, not only that He was buried, but also that He rose again for our justification, and was exalted by the right hand of God, and was therefore constituted Lord of all, and Judge of the living and the dead.

In a word, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in a scriptural sense, is to accept Him in all the fulness of that character, both personal and official, in which He is revealed to us in the gospel; also to receive heartily what He says; and joyfully do what He commands, thus building on Him all our hopes of future and endless happiness. With such a belief on Jesus as this, is connected the assurance of salvation from all past sins, and of the present enjoyment of God's favor.

The jailer and all his house thus believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, which was manifested by their hearty repentance and ready obedience. Thus "delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son," they were no longer "strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints and of the household of God. In the forgiveness of all past sins, the

comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life, their hearts are filled to overflowing with joys that are unspeakable and full of glory.

Friendly hearer, would you participate in this heaven-born joy while journeying through this land of sorrow and of death? If you would, then while mercy calls and mercy pleads, lend a willing ear to the *Word of the Lord*, which is none other than the gospel of your salvation. Quickened and guided by this divine message, turn away from the world with all its allurements, come to the loving Savior, bow to His divine authority; and thus enter His heavenly kingdom that you may find rest for your grief-laden and sin-burdened souls. Then sustained and encouraged by all the exceedingly great and precious promises found in the Word of the living God, live supremely for Him who died for you and rose again, that you may ever go on your way rejoicing in view of the bright and glorious inheritance that awaits all the children of God.

“Come unto me whosoever is thirsty,
Drink from the fountain flowing for thee,
Fountain of gladness, life everlasting.
Forth from the throne 'tis flowing so free.”

“Come whosoever will to the fountain,
Come without money, come ye and drink,
Jesus invites you, why do you tarry,
'Tis but a step from you to the brink.”

“Come all ye thirsty, drink ye and live,
Jesus the water freely will give;
Life everlasting, drink to your soul,
Drink of the water, drink and be whole.”

Eleventh Sermon.

HOUSEHOLD CONVERSIONS.

“*Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.*” *Acts 16:31.*

In all the cases of conversion that have been considered in the preceding discourses, excepting households, it cannot be denied that all the persons who were baptized had heard the gospel and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. It was by hearing the word that they were enabled to believe; for “faith comes by hearing,” that is by the testimony that is heard, and this hearing or testimony is “by the Word of God.”

It was also by believing the truth and heartily repenting of sin that they became the proper subjects of baptism. All will agree that faith and repentance are indispensable prerequisites to a true and valid Christian baptism on the part of all those who have arrived at the age of accountability. It is confidently believed, however, by many devout persons, that not only penitent believers, but infants also, are proper subjects of Christian baptism; and the households mentioned by Luke and Paul are cited as examples of the actual baptism of infants.

We now propose to examine closely all the household cases, and to consider candidly and carefully all the facts pertaining to them, in order to ascertain if they present any exceptions to the *rule* which we have deduced from the *Commission*, and which was so strictly observed in all other cases of conversion.

I. THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS.

Who composed the audience found in the house of Cornelius, when Peter entered and preached unto them

the word of the Lord? Luke distinctly mentions three classes of persons: (1) "his household servants," (2) "soldiers that waited on him continually," (3) "his kinsman and near friends;" but he says not a word about wife, or children of any age. (Acts 10:7, 24) Cornelius may have had a wife, or he may not. He may have had children or he may not. He may have had infant children, or he may not. The narrative is utterly silent with reference to all these things; and it is certainly a fallacious method of reasoning to assume anything as a matter of fact, that is not mentioned, or even alluded to, and then base an argument on that assumption. We can prove anything, if we are only permitted to assume our premises. But even if there were infants in the household of Cornelius, we think the facts clearly show that they were not among those who were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

When Peter went into the house of Cornelius, it is said that he found many who had come together, consisting of the persons mentioned above, with reference to whom Cornelius said, "Now therefore we are all present in the sight of God, *to hear* all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord." To this assembly of persons who were thus able, willing, and waiting to hear the Word of the Lord, Peter proceeded to preach Christ Jesus and Him crucified, and finally summed up the whole matter in one pointed declaration. "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43.) This shows conclusively that the apostle was speaking to those only, and of those only, who are capable of believing the Word of the Lord, and who are guilty of personal sins on account of which they stand in need of forgiveness. Neither of these is true of infants. They are incapable of believing; and they have no personal sins to be forgiven.

Next we have the statement that "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them who *heard the word.*" The six Jewish brethren who had accompanied Peter were amazed when they saw "that on the Gentiles also was poured out the Holy Spirit;" yet they could not doubt or deny the fact, "for they heard them *speak with tongues and magnify God.*" They were capable then both of *hearing* and of *speaking*. "Then answered Peter," evidently addressing the six Jewish brethren, "can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" No man daring to forbid, "he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:44-48.)

Now, who were baptized? Those only who were commanded to be baptized. Who then were commanded to be baptized? Those who had received the Holy Spirit. Who had received the Holy Spirit? Those only who had heard the word and believed. It follows then irresistibly that only those who had heard the word and believed were baptized, and as infants can neither hear the word nor believe, they are thus expressly excluded from this baptism, even if there were any in the house of Cornelius.

That those on whom the Holy Spirit fell were at that instant believers in Jesus as the Christ, having heartily received the truth as it was presented by the apostle, is established beyond all dispute by the explanation of this matter which Peter gave to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem when they were discussing the question whether the Gentile believers should be required to be circumcised or not. "And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, said unto them, Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe, and God who knoweth the heart, bare

them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:7-9.) The clear and explicit testimony of Peter puts it beyond the reach of successful contradiction that they first heard and then believed; and that God bore them witness by the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit, thus opening the door of faith to the Gentiles for all coming time, as He had previously opened it to the Jews; and also that He cleansed their hearts by faith, and not by the miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit.

The persons who thus heard, who thus believed, who thus had their hearts cleansed by faith, who thus received the Holy Spirit, and were thereby enabled to speak with tongues, were the persons who were commanded to be baptized. Not one of these things has ever been true of infants. The power to speak with tongues was a miraculous gift, it is true, which was directly conferred on men through the on-coming of the Holy Spirit; but there is not one single instance in all this history of wonders in which this gift was ever bestowed on an infant. The sum of the whole matter, so far as the subjects of this baptism are concerned, is simply this:—None were baptized on this occasion but those on whom the Holy Spirit fell as he had fallen on the Jews; the Holy Spirit thus fell on none but those who heard the word and believed; therefore none were baptized on this occasion but those who heard the word and believed.

II. THE HOUSEHOLD OF LYDIA.

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If

ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there, And she constrained us. (Acts 16:14,15.) "And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia: and when *they had seen* the brethren they comforted them and departed." (Acts 16:40.)

All the information that we have concerning Lydia and her household is contained in these three verses of the 19th chapter of Acts. So many facts are here stated that only the briefest mention is made of each. All that is said, however, is plain and pointed. From verses fourteen and fifteen, we gather the following facts. (1.) Lydia was of the city of Thyatira. (2.) She was at this time engaged in selling purple in the city of Philippi. (3.) She was a worshiper of God, and with other women had resorted to the river side for prayer. (4.) Hearing the gospel, the Lord opened her heart to attend to the things spoken by Paul. (5.) She was baptized, and also her household. (6.) She besought and constrained Paul and Silas to abide in her house.

With reference to Lydia herself, it can not be denied that she heard, believed and voluntarily obeyed the gospel; and thus her individual case constitutes no exception to the Rule of Conversion. If there are any exceptions in this case, they are found in her household. But what evidence have we that any of the persons belonging to this household, did not hear and believe the gospel as well as Lydia, before they were baptized? Just none at all. This may be deemed a strong statement. If so, let him that demurs adduce the evidence. That there were persons in that baptized household who were incapable of believing is simply an inference. While there is not a particle of evidence that there were any infants in this baptized household, there is plain and positive evidence that those who were baptized, were all believers. In the thirteenth verse it is said, "And we sat down and spake unto the wo-

men who had come together." Here it was that Lydia heard and was baptized; and as her household was likewise baptized, it is arbitrary to assume that they did not hear and believe also.

In the argument for infant baptism which is founded on this case, four things are necessarily assumed. (1.) that Lydia was at that time, or had recently been, a married woman. (2.) That she had children who were with her at Philippi. (3.) That some of these were infant children. (4.) That these infant children were baptized. Now in order to make out a case of infant baptism here, these four things must be positively proved. But to prove these four things is utterly impossible; for there is not even the shadow of evidence for any of these assumptions. On the contrary, the facts stated render the first, second and third, highly improbable, and put the fourth entirely out of the question. Even if the first, second and third could be proved, the fourth would not necessarily follow.

If Lydia had a husband at that time, he was utterly ignored by Luke in every statement concerning herself or her household. She is represented as saying, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house." And when Paul and Silas were released from prison, "they entered into the house of Lydia. The household is also called "her household." All these facts imply that she was the sole head of that household.

It may be said that she was a widow, and had with her her fatherless children. This, however is the merest conjecture; and if we are permitted to form our premises from conjecture, we can prove anything we please. Conjecture does not constitute a sufficient basis on which to found an institution, or establish a practice. But even if Lydia was a widow and had children, the facts are all against the assumption that any of these were infants. If

she had any infant children, her husband could not have been long dead; and as she was at this time some 300 miles from her native city and engaged in mercantile business, it is hardly probable that on her husband's death she would have started out in her sorrow with a babe in her arms to engage in such an enterprise.

But if all these wild conjectures are granted, it will not necessarily follow that any infants were baptized on this occasion; for we can not by any fair construction include in the household that was baptized any who did not, like Lydia, attend to the things spoken by Paul. It may be asked, Who composed the household of Lydia, if she did not have a husband and children? We can not say with certainty; nor is it necessary that we should be able to answer this question as to the persons constituting her household. The business in which she was engaged required that she should have a house and assistants; and in view of all the facts stated, it is most probable that her household consisted of her assistants in business and her domestic servants. However this may be, there is an additional fact stated by Luke that settles the question as to the character of the persons composing Lydia's household. When Paul and Silas entered into her house after they were released from prison, it is said, "And when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed." Whom did they comfort? The *brethren* not the *babes*. Where did they find these brethren? In Lydia's house. Therefore these brethren whom they comforted, constituted the household that was baptized.

III. THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE PHILIPPIAN.

Having in a previous discourse treated of this case of conversion at some length, I will at this time notice those facts only that relate to the character of the persons who were baptized. All that can ever be known concerning

the subjects of this baptism, is found in Acts 16:28-34. Is it stated that there were any infants in this household? It is certainly not so stated. Is there any statement in any part of the narrative that even implies that there were any infants belonging to this household? There is not even a hint or an allusion to any thing of the kind. If it is said, on the one hand, that there may have been infants in this house; it can be said on the other hand, that there may not have been any infants therein; and the one *may-be* is just as good as the other. Many households have infants in them it is true; but many others have not; and we have no right to assume that this household belongs to the one class or the other.

In a case of this kind, involving a religious practice, we need something better than a *perhaps* or a *maybe*. We need, and we have a right to demand, positive proof. But of positive proof for the practice in question, there is absolutely none. That there were infants in this or any other household that was baptized, is a matter simply of inference or conjecture. But on the other hand, there is plain and positive evidence in this case, as in others, that the household baptized was a household of believers.

There are three statements that cover the entire ground as to the character of the persons composing this household; and these statements are found in three consecutive verses. (1.) "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house." (2.) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his. (3.) And he brought them up into the house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God." (Acts 16:32-34.) From the first of these statements, we learn that the Word of the Lord was spoken not only to the jailer, but also to all that were in his house. This necessarily excludes infants; for they are utterly in-

capable of hearing, understanding, or obeying the gospel. They are also incapable of enjoying any of the blessings that are found in the kingdom of God on earth. Inspired men never preached the gospel to unconscious babes; for the gospel is not addressed to them, but to those who are capable of understanding believing, and obeying it.

In the second of these statements, we are told that "he and all his" were baptized the same hour of the night. By no legitimate construction can "all his" be made to include more than "all that were in his house," And as "all that were in his house" had heard the Word of the Lord that was spoken by Paul and Silas, it follows that "all his" who were baptized had heard the same message of salvation, for the two phrases include the same persons. In the third of these statements, it is plainly stated that his house was a rejoicing as well as a believing house. It could not be said with truth that the jailer rejoiced with all his house unless all his house rejoiced with him. He is associated with all that were in his house in hearing, in being baptized, in rejoicing, and in having believed in God. It follows then that all to whom the Word of the Lord was spoken, all who were baptized, and all who rejoiced, were the same persons; and thus their character as hearers and believers is settled beyond successful dispute.

The promise made by Paul and Silas to the jailer when they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house," is thus verified. Salvation is here promised to the jailer's house on the same condition on which it is promised to him; and that condition is a faith that receives, trusts in, and builds on the Lord Jesus Christ. It will not do to say that the jailer's house was to be saved on his faith, as this would include not only his infant children, if he had any, but also his wife, his adult children, and his domestic servants; for all these belong to the household as well as infants. This

position proves entirely too much, and therefore proves nothing at all.

No one can be saved on the faith of another. The jailer himself was to be saved on the condition of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and so was every member of his family or household. Therefore the Word of the Lord was spoken to him "with all that were in his house." All heard, all believed, all were baptized, and all rejoiced. In this case then as in the two preceding ones, we find no exception to the Rule of Conversion as laid down in the Commission.

IV. THE HOUSEHOLD OF CRISPUS.

"And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Acts 18:8.

This statement is so plain that it needs but little if any comment. It asserts positively not only that Crispus believed, but also that all his house believed, not merely a part of it. While it is so plainly stated that they believed, their baptism is simply implied in the statement which immediately follows. Paul tells us in his first letter to the Corinthians that he baptized Crispus and Gaius; but he says not a word about the household of Crispus. The members of this household were evidently included among the "many Corinthians" who on "hearing, believed and were baptized." This puts it beyond doubt that they all without any exception first heard, then believed, and then were baptized."

V. THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS.

"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas." I Cor. 1:16.

Now the question is, What character of persons composed this household? This is the only question that can have any bearing on the investigation as to the subjects of

baptism in this household. But how are we to decide this matter. We can not settle it by conjecturing what may, or may not, have been. The question can be decided only by positive testimony. But have we any testimony of this kind bearing on this case? Let us see. Turn to the last chapter of 1st Corinthians, and 15th verse, we read, "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints." This settles the question as to this household. Infants can not "set themselves to minister unto the saints," or "addict themselves to the ministry of the saints," as the common version has it; therefore there were no infants in this baptized household.

VI. THE HOUSEHOLD OF ARISTOBULUS, AND THE HOUSEHOLD OF NARCISSUS.

We consider these two cases together because of the very brief mention that is made of them, and because the same thing is said of both. In both cases, the term household is supplied in the English version, not being expressed in the Greek; yet we admit that it is rightly supplied, the use of the article in the Greek clearly pointing to this, or to some other word of similar import. As these two households were recognized by Paul as members of the church at Rome, it follows as a matter of course that they had been baptized. This is evident from what Paul says to the Romans: "Are you ignorant that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Rom. 6:3.) This includes Paul, all the saints at Rome, and all the saints elsewhere; for all the members of all the churches in the days of the apostles had been baptized.

Now what was the character of the persons composing these two households? There is just one brief statement concerning each; and one word in each case shows the character of each household. "Salute them who are of the

household of Aristobulus." "Salute them of the household of Narcissus, who are in the Lord." (Rom. 15:10, 11.) This is all and yet enough. They were persons who were capable of receiving salutations, and therefore capable of hearing and believing the truth.

VII. TERMS RENDERED HOUSEHOLD.

In the Greek New Testament, there are two terms, each of which is properly rendered into English by the word household or family. These terms, giving them in English letters, are *oikos*, and *oikia*, the first masculine, the second feminine. Mr. Hughey in his discussion with President Braden took the position that *oikos* invariably includes children who may be infant children, while *oikia* does not; hence he claimed as supporting infant baptism only those passages in which household is the rendering of *oikos*. Pres. Braden declared that there was no authority whatever for this position, and appealed to the classical usage of the term. He showed that *oikos* was frequently used to denote the staff of a general which could hardly have been composed of infants; nor could it have included even a single infant. To this no reply could be made.

I will now cite the definition of both terms as given by Liddell and Scott in their abridged Greek Lexicon, and as found in Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon of the New Testament.

Liddell and Scott:—"ΟΙΚΟΣ, a house, abode, dwelling; any place to live in; part of a house, room, chamber, a temple. II. household affairs, house-wifery; household property and goods. III. A household, family. IV. A house, race, family." ΟΙΚΙΑ, a house, dwelling. II. A household; also the inmates of a house, Lat. familia. III. A house or family from which one is descended."

Bagster's Analytical Lexicon:—"ΟΙΚΟΣ, house, dwelling; place of abode, seat, site; metaphorically, a spiritual

house or structure; by metonymy, a household, family, a spiritual household; family, lineage; a people, nation." "OIKIA, a house, dwelling, an abode; tropically, the bodily abode of the soul; by metonymy, household, family, a spiritual household, family, goods, property, means."

From these definitions, the first founded on classical usage and the second on New Testament usage, the following facts are apparent.

(1.) Both words literally mean a house, dwelling, or place of abode. (2.) By the figure of speech called metonymy which applies the name of the container to that which is contained, both words are used to denote the family or household, that is, all who are contained in the house or dwelling. This is the only usage that has any bearing on the question as to the subjects of baptism. (3.) Both words in classic usage denote a race or lineage, people or nation; but in the New Testament only *oikos* is thus used. Now we readily grant that a race or lineage a people or nation, includes infants; but we learn this not from the meaning either of *oikos* or *oikia*, but from the facts of the case. This usage of the word, however, has no bearing on the question as to the subjects of baptism; for the apostles never baptized a race or a nation as such, but individuals many, and households a few.

It is the second usage, as noted above, that bears on the question which we are considering. In this usage, by an expressive figure, it simply denotes the persons living in a certain house or dwelling. The character of these persons, whether males or females, or both; whether all adults, or part children including infants, can not be determined by the word used, whether *oikos* or *oikia*; but must be determined by the facts of the case, if determined at all.

We have examined each case in the light of its context; and we think the facts stated by the inspired writers

clearly show that all these baptized households were believing and penitent households; and hence the joy that they manifested on escaping the condemnation of sin, and realizing the mercy of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Here we rest the argument.

Christian parents, should your children die in infancy, give yourselves no trouble with reference to their future condition. You may rest assured that the Lord will take care of the innocent babes. Should they live, train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, set a godly example before them; pray often with and for them, and exhort them to give themselves to Jesus; and thus they will be enabled, when they believe in Jesus and repent of their sins, to render a personal obedience to Him who died for them and rose again.

“Happy the home, when God is there,
And love fills every breast;
Where one their wish, and one their prayer,
And one their heavenly rest.”

“Happy the home, where Jesus’ name
Is sweet to every ear;
Where children early lisp His fame,
And parents hold Him dear.”

• “Happy the home, where prayer is heard,
And praise is wont to rise;
Where parents love the sacred word,
And live but for the skies.”

“Lord! let us in our home agree,
This blessed peace to gain,
Unite our hearts in love to thee,
And love to all will reign.”

Twelfth Sermon.

CASES OF CONVERSION BRIEFLY MENTIONED OR MERELY
ALLUDED TO.

“*And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved,*” or “*being saved.*” Acts 2:47.

In the first sermon of this *Series*, an effort was made by a careful induction of scriptural facts to ascertain what *Conversion* is in the full scriptural import of the term. It was found that when this term is applied to the fact of man's return to God, it is always used in an active, and not in a passive sense; and that conversion is therefore the act of turning on the part of man himself from the love and practice of sin to the love and service of God. It was also found to embrace in every case three great radical changes:—(1.) a change of heart in the broad scriptural import of the term heart; (2.) a change of conduct, that is, of the course or manner of life; and (3.) a change of state or relationship. Thus the whole man in every department of his moral and spiritual being is completely revolutionized; and he becomes a new creature, of whom it is said, “The old things are passed away; behold they are become new.”

In the second sermon, the *Agencies of Conversion*, both divine and human, both inspired and uninspired, were considered. These were found to be:—(1.) the Holy Spirit; (2.) the apostles and their inspired co-laborers; (3.) all faithful preachers of the gospel in every age and country; (4.) all true and faithful disciples of Jesus everywhere; (5.) and in every case the sinner himself.

In the third sermon, the *instrumentality of the Truth*

was the subject of investigation; and from scriptural teaching and facts, the conclusion was reached that in all cases of conversion the truth is the living and incorruptible seed that is sown into honest and understanding hearts for the purpose of bringing forth fruit unto eternal life—that as a fire and hammer, it breaks the stony heart—and that it will even break up, pulverize, and fertilize the hard-trodden wayside, if permitted to remain there.

In the fourth sermon, the *Commission*, as given in full, when the partial reports of John, Luke, and Mark are combined in the proper order was analyzed in connection with the grand summary given by the Savior himself on the mountain in Galilee, as reported by Matthew only. From all these reports the *Rule of Conversion* was deduced. This *Rule*, which was to remain in force during the entire Christian dispensation, sets forth the gospel of Christ as the medium through which God's quickening or life-begetting power is brought to bear on human hearts and lives. This gospel requires of all accountable men and women as conditions of enjoyment, not procurement, the following things:—(1.) faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners; (2.) repentance toward God of all sin; (3.) and baptism into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In the fifth sermon, the *History of Conversions* was taken up as an exemplification of the *Commission*, or a practical application of the *Rule of Conversion*; and the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was devoutly studied, this being the beginning point both as to time and place from which the *Word of the Lord* was to go forth to all nations in order to “the obedience of faith.” This being intended for a model case to all nations and to all coming ages, it was as a matter of course in exact accordance with the *Commission*; for as the preaching of repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus began •

at Jerusalem, so it was to go forth to all the nations of the earth.

In the sixth sermon, the *Conversion of Cornelius* and his household audience was carefully studied in all its details, in which case the purpose of God with reference to the Gentiles was clearly revealed, and His will that they should be received into the church or Body of Christ on terms of perfect equality with the Jews authoritatively made known.

In the seventh sermon, the three accounts of *Saul's Conversion* were compared, combined, and all the facts duly considered. The things that pertained to his call and qualifications as an apostle were distinguished from the things that constituted his conversion, or turning to the Lord. With reference to the former, his case furnishes no example to the sinner; with reference to the latter, it is a bright and shining example that all should follow.

In the eighth sermon, the *Conversion of the Samaritans* was presented as in accordance both with the Commission and other cases of conversion previously examined; all the facts concerning Simon were fully and fairly presented, and an effort was made to ascertain the true lesson which the case of Simon was intended to impress upon the people of God. It is a lesson to the Church rather than to the world, and shows how the erring Christian may through repentance and prayer return to the enjoyment of that favor which he has forfeited by cherishing sinful desires which lead to sinful acts.

In the ninth sermon, the *Conversion of the Ethiopian* treasurer enables us to see how a devout student of Old Testament prophecy was led into the light and joy of gospel favor by the simple yet divine means that were employed. From the very Scripture that he was reading, Jesus was preached unto him: and this preaching necessa-

rily involved the setting forth of the entire gospel plan of salvation in all its fundamental truths, facts, precepts, promises and warnings. Thus he was saved as all others had been.

In the tenth sermon, the *Conversion of the Philippian Jailer* was used to show the power of the gospel to enlighten the mind and purify the heart of a Pagan, to turn him from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, to deliver him from all fear and translate him and all his the same hour of the night into the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

In the eleventh sermon, all the cases of *Household Conversion* were examined in detail; and all the facts pertaining to each and all were carefully noted. It was clearly shown, we think, that these cases do not furnish a single exception to the *Rule of Conversion* which is laid down in the *Commission*, and so fully exemplified in the other cases of conversion. It was shown by clear and express statements that the persons who constituted these households all heard, believed, and repented, as well as were baptized; and that after their baptism they rejoiced and were comforted.

We come now to the consideration of a number of cases, the history of which is not given in full—cases that are quite briefly mentioned, and in some instances described in a single word. We hold that these cases do not, either separately or collectively, furnish a solitary exception to the *Rule of Conversion* so authoritatively laid down by the Savior for all coming time; and also that in every thing that pertains to conversion itself, they were all precisely analogous to those cases that are described with the most minuteness and completeness.

We maintain that conversion is a process, including in all cases a three-fold turning:—(1.) a turning to the Lord in heart; (2.) a turning to the Lord in the course or

manner of life; (3.) a turning to the Lord in state or relationship; and that no case of conversion is complete without all these changes. It follows from this that whenever one item of this divinely arranged process is mentioned in alluding to any case of conversion, the others are all necessarily implied. Any other principle of interpretation applied to these cases will introduce confusion without remedy, and conflict beyond the power of reconciliation.

We take a familiar illustration, and enumerate the items pertaining to the case.

1. A crime is committed.
2. The accused party is arrested.
3. An examining trial is held.
4. A true bill is found, and the prisoner is held to appear at court.
5. At the appointed time the court convenes.
6. A jury is impaneled.
7. The prisoner is brought before the court.
8. Witnesses pro and con are examined.
9. Attorneys prosecute and advocates plead.
10. The judge delivers a charge to the jury.
11. The jury retires and brings in a verdict of guilty.
12. The judge pronounces the sentence and fixes the day of its execution.
13. At the appointed time the proper officials carry out the sentence by inflicting the punishment prescribed by the law for such cases.

Now this whole process must be gone through with, in order to the legal punishment of any one for a capital offense. But in speaking of a case of this kind, who would think it necessary to enumerate all these items in detail? To do so would be to insult the intelligence of the hearer. All these requirements are embodied in the laws of the state, and exemplified every time a trial is held on account of a capital offense. And as all these things are

well understood, we often cover the whole process with a single word. We say, for instance, that a certain man is convicted of murder. Would any sane man take the position that nothing either preceded or followed the conviction? Surely not. To say that he was convicted—which is the eleventh item in the enumeration given above—is to say that the preceding ten have already been done, and that the two remaining ones must follow according to the law in the case.

We take up our morning paper and read that John Blank was hanged yesterday at 10 a. m. by the sheriff of the county. Would we infer from this that the sheriff just caught up John Blank and hanged him till he was dead without judge, jury, trial or anything else—no crime having been committed or laid to his charge? Certainly not. The simple statement that the man was hanged by the sheriff necessarily implies the observance of the whole process of the law in the case. This is a pertinent and striking illustration of the subject under consideration.

In the *Commission*, which is the great organic law of the kingdom, the Savior himself marked out the whole process of conversion for all men of all races throughout all coming ages. On the day of Pentecost, the whole matter was fully exemplified; and the history of this case has been given in sufficient minuteness of detail for the instruction both of those who are seeking the way of life, and those whose duty it is to guide others into this way. Other cases of special importance have been detailed with sufficient fulness to give us a clear understanding of the whole matter. Now, what a mass of needless repetitions Luke's history would have been, if he had gone over the whole process in minute detail every time a case of conversion is mentioned! Having fully exemplified the *Rule of Conversion* in its application both to the Jews and Gentiles in the history of the cases given at length, it was only

necessary to mention other cases, or in the briefest manner allude to them. Most of these cases will now be passed in review in the order in which they are mentioned by Luke.

1. "*But many of them that heard the Word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.*" (Acts 4:4.)

Though brief, this is a significant statement. The whole matter is summed up in two words—*heard* and *believed*. The first includes all the means of procurement; the second embraces all the conditions of enjoyment. Through hearing, the converting or regenerating power of God was brought to bear on their hearts; and in believing they cordially accepted both the means and conditions of their salvation. "It is written in the prophets," says Jesus, "And they shall all be taught of God." As first uttered by the prophets, and afterward quoted by Jesus, this declaration has direct reference to the subject of which we are now treating—the conversion of sinners. The Savior's comment on this is, "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me." If men would study and practically observe the forty-fifth verse of the sixth chapter of John instead of choking themselves to death with the forty-fourth verse, how much better it would be for them both here and hereafter.

(1.) *They heard the word.* What word? The word preached by the apostle, a synopsis of whose sermon is given in the preceding chapter. In this discourse, Jesus is set before them as the Holy and Righteous One, as the Prince of Life, in whose name there is not only power to heal the lame, but also to cleanse and save the sinful. His supreme authority and judicial power are set forth in the clearest light, and as they have rejected Him and desired a murderer released unto them, they are exhorted to repent and turn to the Lord that they may enjoy the for-

givenness of sins and seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

(2.) *They believed.* Believed what? What they heard of course—the Word that was preached unto them—the Word that pointed out to them the way of salvation. In believing this Word, they accepted all that it contained; its conditions of enjoyment, as well as its provisions of mercy; its precepts, as well as its promises. The provisions of mercy are found in the sacrificial offering and mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ; but what are the conditions of enjoyment? When Peter came to make a practical application of his discourse, he said to them, “Repent ye therefore and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19.)

Now, as the statement that they believed is made after the discourse is reported, it follows conclusively that their belief included both repentance and turning again as the conditions on which their sins would be blotted out, as well as the facts concerning Jesus which constituted the means of their salvation. The exhortation of Peter in this case is precisely equivalent to the answer which he gave to believing inquirers on the day of Pentecost: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38.)

As “repent ye” in the one is unquestionably equivalent to “repent ye” in the other, it follows conclusively that “turn again” in the one is also equivalent to “be baptized” in the other, and “seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” in the one, to “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in the other. In stating the results of the first discourse, Luke says: “They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.” In giving the re-

sults of the second discourse, he says: "Many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand." These two statements are precisely equivalent, so far as the conversion in both cases is concerned. In the latter statement, the single word, *believed*, covers the whole ground of conversion, and includes the same repentance and baptism that were required on the day of Pentecost. Thus they were all one in Christ. They all exercised the same faith, manifested the same repentance, submitted to the same baptism, and rejoiced in the enjoyment of the same blessings—the remission of their sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of eternal life.

II "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts 5:14. Believers in what? Evidently believers in Christ. As the context clearly shows, they were convinced by the many signs and wonders which were wrought by the hands of the apostles, that Jesus was indeed and in truth the Christ; and thus they were led to seek through Him the forgiveness of their sins. But how were they added to the Lord? According to the Commission, and the example given to all nations and to all coming ages on the day of Pentecost, they must have repented and been baptized. This was in accordance with the organic law of the kingdom. Paul, however, settles the matter beyond all dispute when he says: "Ye are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." (Gal. 3:22-27.) Under the ministry of the apostles, all "put on Christ," or were "added to the Lord in the same way.

III. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7.)

“The faith” to which they became obedient, and “the Word of God” which increased, were one and the same; and both expressions are simply equivalent to “the gospel of Christ” which was preached by the apostles, and which according to Paul is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” whether Jew or Greek. In becoming “obedient to the faith,” these priests heartily accepted all that “the faith” taught them—willingly did all that “the faith” required of them—joyfully received all that “the faith” promised them. The one word, *obedient*, here covers the whole ground of their conversion or turning to the Lord, and it necessarily includes faith, repentance and baptism on their part.

IV. “It came to pass as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed, and straightway he arose. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and they turned to the Lord.” (Acts 9:32-35.)

In this case, the simple but expressive statement that “they turned to the Lord” covers the entire ground of their conversion both in its means and its conditions. Not a word is said as to what they heard, or what may have been required of them. It is not even intimated that Peter preached to them at all; yet he must have done so, for he was out on a preaching tour, and preaching was the great work to which the Savior had called him. He must have preached Jesus to them as the Lord of all; for otherwise how could they have turned to the Lord? The healing of Aeneas, I doubt not, was mainly for the purpose of arresting the attention of the people, and preparing them to listen to the message of salvation. This message they heard, this they received, and

this they obeyed—believing on Jesus, repenting of their sins, and being baptized in the name of Jesus as the Lord of all. Thus they turned to the Lord in heart, in life, and in relationship.

V. When Peter restored Dorcas to life, it is said that this miracle “became known throughout all Joppa; and many believed on the Lord.” (Acts 9:42.) In believing on the Lord, they accepted Him as their Savior, turned away from their sinful life, that is they repented and were baptized by the authority of Jesus “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Any thing short of this is not believing on the Lord in the scriptural sense of this deeply significant expression.

VI. “They therefore that were scattered abroad, upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen, traveled as far as Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.” (Acts 11:19-21.)

In this case the means of conversion are presented in the statement that the men of Cyprus and Cyrene “spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus;” while the conversion itself of a great number in that city who became Christians, is expressed in two words—they *believed* and *turned to the Lord*. In the example preceding this, the one phrase, turning to the Lord, embraces the whole process of conversion; but in this case, it does not cover so much ground; yet it embraces all that belongs to conversion, except what is expressed in the term *believed*, that is, it includes repentance and baptism. They believed the same gospel that the Jews did on the day of Pentecost; and they turned to the Lord in the same way,

that is, they repented and were baptized. How plain the way of salvation, when we look at it through the examples found in the Acts of the Apostles.

VII. "Then the proconsul when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord," (Acts 14:12.)

We learn from the context that he had voluntarily sought an opportunity to "hear the Word of God," and that Elymas had endeavored to "turn him aside from the faith." "The Word of God," "the Faith," and "the Teaching of the Lord," are all the same. They mean simply the gospel plan of salvation including all that it provides for us and requires of us. In believing "the Word of God," in receiving "the faith," in submitting to "the teaching of the Lord," the proconsul heartily embraced the means of salvation and willingly accepted the conditions of its enjoyment. We must understand therefore that he did all that others were required to do, and was brought into the Church according to the Rule of Conversion laid down by the Savior for all nations and all ages.

VIII, "And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." (Acts 13:48.)

We find in this case a contrast between the disposition and conduct of the Jews and that of the Gentiles with reference to the "Word of God," that is, the gospel of Christ. On the preceding Sabbath, Paul had preached a thrilling discourse to the Jews, showing that in condemning and crucifying Jesus, they had unintentionally fulfilled the prophecies that pointed Him out as the Christ. He then proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus, and through Him preached unto them the remission of sins. This discourse of the apostle made so deep an impression on the audience, that many of the Jews and devout proselytes

followed him; "and the next Sabbath day almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God."

This filled the unbelieving Jews with jealousy; and they at once set themselves in opposition, and "contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed." Then Paul and Barnabas said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 13:46, 47) It was this announcement of God's purpose concerning them that made the Gentiles glad, caused them to glorify the word of God, and led to their salvation through faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Jews who contradicted and blasphemed deliberately rejected the gospel and thrust away from themselves the means of their own salvation, while the Gentiles on the contrary voluntarily and gladly received the truth and were saved.

"As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The following explanation of this much controverted passage is taken from an old number of the Christian Standard. "This text has long been a battle ground between Calvinists and Arminians. We submit the criticisms of two very candid and considerate commentators who on this text, may be taken to represent the most moderate school of Calvinistic interpretation.

"The Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life; the Gentiles, as many as were disposed to eternal life, believed. By whom so disposed, it is not here declared; nor need the word be in this place further particularized. We know that it is God who worketh in us the will to believe, and that the preparation of the heart is of

Him; but to find in this text preordination to life asserted, is to force both the word and the context to a meaning which they do not contain.'—Alford.

'That the word here rendered ordained signifies not merely a disposition of mind in the actor, but a determination or decision affecting him by some one else, and here by God, is, I think, clear from the following considerations: (1.) the form of the verb, which is the passive participle: they were disposed by some power or influence acting upon them; (2.) from the verb itself (*tasso*) which signifies, not a mere mental disposition or choice, but a determination or decree; * * * * * (3.) from other parallel teachings of the New Testament, which represent faith as the result of divine grace working in the heart of a believer. * * * * * But there is certainly nothing in this passage to indicate that the divine disposing of the Gentiles was an eternal or an inevitable decree; nothing more is indicated than an effectual work of grace, accepted by the Gentiles and for that reason effectual.'—Abbott.

'Mr. Abbott's last remark is a surrender of the whole controversy. Granting that the form of the verb indicates a disposing or determining by some power or influence acting upon them; had not Paul and Barnabas been bringing such influence or power to bear upon them? and had not they fully preached the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes? The fact is clear as day in the narrative, that Paul and Barnabas disposed them to eternal life by preaching the gospel to them, and that as a result of their influence, thus exerted upon them, they believed; and that the difference between the two parties was, that one accepted the gospel and the other rejected it.'—Christian Standard.

It is also clear that in accepting the gospel, they not only accepted what Jesus had done for them, but also what

He required them to do; hence they turned away from all their Gentile vanities, and like all others who were brought into the fold under the ministry of the apostles, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Their conversion was like that of the Jews at Jerusalem and that of the Gentiles at Cæsarea. They received the same truth, obeyed the same Lord, and enjoyed the same blessings.

IX. "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; and Paul as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, said he, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." (Acts 17:1-4.)

Persuaded of what? Persuaded of the truth of what Paul had preached—that Jesus was the Christ, that He had suffered all the things written of Him in the Scriptures, that He had risen from the dead, and had been exalted by the right hand of the Father. Being persuaded of these things, they consorted with Paul and Silas; that is, they became their disciples as the word implies, and through their teaching and example, the disciples of Jesus. They are afterward called brethren, (vs. 6-10) which shows they were fully identified with Paul and Silas, and recognized as followers of the Lord.

This was the planting of the church at Thessalonica, which long years afterward was so prosperous, and so highly commended by the apostles. From the first chapter of First Thessalonians, we may learn what the brief statement of Luke means. In reminding them of their conversion, Paul says, "Ye became imitators of us and of

the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; so that ye became an example to all that believe, in Macedonia and Achaia." As they became imitators of the apostles and of the Lord, they not only accepted the truth of the gospel, but they also obeyed each and all of its requirements. In this way only could they have become "an example" to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, as Paul says they did.

Their conversion then necessarily included all that the conversion of the three thousand at the beginning included—all indeed that any other case included—the same faith, the same repentance, the same obedience, yet Luke simply states that they "were persuaded and consorted with Paul and Silas." To have added any more in this case would have been a needless repetition.

X. "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Now, these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of the men, not a few." (Acts 17:10-12.)

The simple statement, that "many of them therefore believed," implies the whole process of conversion, as it is developed in the Commission, and exemplified in the case of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. Paul and Silas preached the word—the gospel—to them faithfully and fully. They gave attention to what they heard, and examined the Scriptures daily to see whether the things preached were in accordance with Old Testament prophecy, or not. They were convinced, and thus received the life-giving seed of the kingdom into honest and understanding hearts; and by it they were begotten to a

new life. In receiving the word with all readiness of mind, they unquestionably received its truths, its facts, its commandments, its promises, and its threatenings. They became obedient to "the faith," as did the eunuch and were enabled to rejoice likewise. This case presents no exception to the Rule of Conversion.

XI. "But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them." (Acts 17: 34.)

Although Paul did not succeed in establishing a church at Athens, yet his effort at that place was not by any means fruitless. There were some hearts of sufficient honesty and understanding to receive the truth, even in that city of babblers. That this was a true and genuine case of conversion, I have no doubt. The word rendered, *clave unto*, means literally to glue or weld together, to adhere to; and hence, metaphorically, to attach one's self to, to unite with, to associate with. As they attached themselves to, or united with the apostle, they must have become the disciples of Jesus. They were welded together with him and with each other by a common faith and a common hope in Jesus as the only Savior of men. It is also said that they believed. This must be taken here in its broad scriptural sense to denote that they heartily accepted Jesus as their Savior, and submitted gladly to His supreme authority. Thus taken it includes both faith and baptism.

XII. "And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8.)

This is a brief statement, and yet it is an all-comprehensive one, so far as conversion is concerned. How exactly it accords with Mark's report of words uttered by

the Savior in giving the Commission. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." It was the gospel which the Corinthians heard, the gospel which they believed, and the gospel which they obeyed. Thus they turned to the Lord, and were saved. Repentance is not mentioned in either of these passages, yet it is clearly implied in both. Mark's report gives us only a part, and that the last part, of what Jesus said to his wondering disciples on that first appearance to them in their evening assembly. From Luke we learn that He had just said that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." The witnesses, however, were required to remain at Jerusalem until they were "clothed with power from on high." It is just at this point that the additional statement, reported by Mark only, comes in. When they received this power, then they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. In doing this, they preached repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus. Paul preached the same gospel at Corinth that Peter preached at Jerusalem and at Cæsarea. Hence the statement that "many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized," necessarily includes the "repentance and remission of sins" preached in His name among all the nations.

CONCLUSION. It is often the case that the name of a part is put for the whole; as the hand or the head for the whole body; or soul for the whole person, including both soul and body. So the terms that strictly denote the different parts of conversion, that is the different acts or steps in turning to the Lord, are often used singly to denote the whole process. From the recognized laws of language,

the well established usages of speech, it follows that if the first step only of the process is mentioned, the succeeding ones are implied, unless the contrary is expressly stated. If the last only is mentioned, the preceding ones are necessarily implied; for the last cannot be reached without going through the whole process. If the first and the last only are mentioned, the intervening ones are absolutely implied; for there was no hop, skip, and jump, in the work done by the apostles, and by those who labored under their direction. Their work was plainly marked out in the Rule which the Lord gave them, and they always hewed to the line regardless of where the chips might fall. Applying this principle of interpretation to Luke's history of conversions, all is consistent and harmonious throughout; and the way of the sinner's return to God is made so plain that "the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err therein."

In all the cases of conversion found in the Acts of the Apostles, whether detailed at length or simply alluded to, the life-giving power of God was brought to bear on the hearts of men through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the agency of the preacher or teacher, and the instrumentality of the truth; for during the days of the apostles these were never separated in the work of conversion. In all these cases, men heard the gospel, believed in Jesus, repented of their sins, and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and then they rejoiced in the forgiveness of sins, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of heaven. As it was then, so it should be now; and so it is now in all cases where conversions take place in accordance with scriptural teaching and example. The same divine power is still brought to bear on darkened minds and sinful hearts through the same agencies and the same medium. The same love still pleads with the erring sons and daughters of men to turn again and live. The same door

of mercy still stands invitingly open to all sin-burdened souls; and the same steps of faith, repentance, and obedience in baptism, will still bring the prodigal back to his Father's house, in which he will meet a loving welcome, receive forgiveness for all past sins, find grace to help in every time of need, and finally, solid comfort and exultant hope in the hour of death.

“Listen, Oh, listen to Jesus,
Tenderly asking your heart,
Willing to rescue and save you,
And His rich grace to impart!
Oh, if His calls are all slighted,
And in your sins you will go,
What will you do in the judgment,
Wonderful day of great woe?

Christ is a refuge for sinners,
Flee to the arms of His love;
If you neglect this salvation,
How can you meet Him above?
Can you not give up your pleasures?
Turn from earth's trifles away?
Oh, if you cling to your idols,
What will you do in that day?

Toiling for wealth that will perish,
Charmed with the toys that decay,
Blinded by sin and by folly,
Sinning from day unto day,
Sinner, just think of your wages,
You for your sin shall receive!
Turn to the dear, loving Savior.
Humbly confess and believe!

Think of the loved ones in heaven,
In yonder city of Light,
Waiting for you at the portals;
What, if your soul take its flight?
Would you be ready to greet them,
Anxious the gate to pass through?
If you have no hope in Jesus,
Sinner; then, what will you do?”

Thirteenth Sermon.

THE GREAT QUESTION:—"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE
SAVED?"—Acts 16:30.

I. THE QUESTION STATED.

Beyond all controversy, this is the most important question that has ever engaged the attention of the human mind, or challenged the devotion of the human heart. In it, is involved the destiny of Adam's sinning race. On it hangs the momentous issue of eternal life or eternal death. In its vast sweep, it embraces all there is, or can be, of pardon for the past, peace for the present, or hope for the future.

Yet how little attention does it receive from the great majority of those who live and die on the Lord's earth? How seldom, even in this land of Bibles and churches, is it pondered over in the heart with that deep and earnest thought that its superlative importance so clearly demands! How rarely, even under the most pungent preaching, is it heard bursting forth from the lips as it wells up from a broken heart, as it was heard of old in the city of Jerusalem, on the way to Damascus, or in the prison house of Philippi! How often, amid all the gracious privileges which surround us, do the comparatively insignificant questions, "What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed?" occupy our thoughts, engross our affections, and enlist our energies to the utter exclusion of this infinitely more important one which involves our spiritual interests for time and eternity! And even when standing beside the grave, and gazing down into its dark and silent vault, how often do the trivial affairs of this vanishing life, shut out from our

vision the awful and unchanging realities of the life to come!

What must I do to be saved? This is the question of questions. This should be the all-absorbing theme to every one who has a mind to think, a heart to feel, and a soul to be saved. How utterly unworthy or serious attention and ardent pursuit, are the fickle fortunes of this fleeting life, when contrasted with the undying interests that cluster in and around this brief but thrilling question! Dying sinner, may this question rivet itself on your attention, engage all the powers of your mind, and quicken all the heavenward aspirations of your heart, until it is answered in the full assurance of pardon, and the well founded hope of eternal life.

What must I do to be saved? There is a world of meaning in this question, brief as it is. On the one hand it implies that man, unbelieving and impenitent, is lost—lost to peace, lost to hope, lost to happiness, and, unless saved, lost forever. This is the most startling fact ever contemplated by the human mind, yet a fact it is. Sin has blinded the mind, corrupted the heart, debased the life, destroyed the happiness, and blighted the hopes of man. It has alienated man from God, and raised between him and heaven obstacles that can neither be evaded by human wisdom, nor removed by human power. Such is the fearful condition of all responsible men and women, as depicted in the Bible, developed in the world's history, and implied in this question. On the other hand, the question implies that man, though lost, sinful and condemned, may nevertheless be saved, that the means of his rescue have not only been devised, but also brought within his reach; that a divine plan has been revealed, by which he may be recovered from his lost condition, restored to the favor of God, and fitted for heaven and endless happiness.

This question also implies that there is something for man himself *to do* in order to his own salvation. If this is not true, if man has really nothing to do in regard to his own salvation, then this question so earnestly propounded by convicted sinners, and so promptly answered by inspired teachers, is not only a useless question,—one that need not be asked by an inquiring penitent,—but also an improper one,—one that is misleading because it is calculated to make a false impression. It is evident that the guilt-stricken souls, who with so much sincerity and anxiety propounded this question, really thought that there was something for them to do in order to their own salvation. And from the plain and positive answers given in each case, enjoining on the inquirers something to be done by them, it is evident that the apostles and other inspired teachers regarded the question in the same light.

But here, once for all, let me note emphatically the important distinction that should ever be made between the *means of procurement* and the *means of enjoyment*. In the *procurement* of his own salvation, man had nothing, *absolutely nothing*, to do. Indeed the whole scheme of redemption was arranged before man himself was created. Hence Christ is represented as the Lamb “who was verily foreordained before the foundation of the world,”

The *procurement* then of salvation *for* man is one thing, while the actual, personal *enjoyment* of salvation *by* man is another and very different thing. The former is entirely of God; but with the latter man’s own personal and voluntary action is inseparably connected. “The grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men;” but the personal enjoyment of salvation has been suspended by God himself on the voluntary compliance of man with the conditions of pardon.

This question then relates not to the means of procurement, but to the conditions of enjoyment. I want this to

be distinctly understood. The people whom I represent, do not teach and never did teach, that anything that man does, can in any sense, or to any degree, procure or purchase his pardon. To represent us as so teaching is to do us the greatest injustice. But then this question teaches, and the answers thereto teach, that certain things have been appointed for every man to do in order to his own personal enjoyment of that salvation which has been procured for him through "the precious blood of Christ, as a Lamb without blemish and without spot." So we believe, and so we teach.

The question then, which we are now considering, is not "What has the Father done for me? "What has the Son done for me?" or "What has the Holy Spirit done for me?" although they are all important, vital, fundamental questions,—questions that should be understood and appreciated, the importance of which should be felt and acknowledged; yet they lie far back of this question concerning each man's own duty and safety. They relate to the procurement of salvation on the part of God; this relates to the enjoyment of salvation on the part of man. The work of the Father, the work of the Son, and the work of the Spirit, without all of which there could have been no salvation, are all taken for granted, and the question now is, "What must I do?—I, the Sinner! I, the lost, the ruined, the condemned one! What must I do to be saved?" This is the question which, addressing itself directly to the mind, the heart, the conscience, of every responsible being, you, O sinner, are called upon to consider with that deep, earnest, and prayerful attention which its vital importance so urgently demands.

The question recurs, "What must I do to be saved?" But what is it *to be saved*? *Save* is a word of comprehensive import. It literally means to preserve or deliver any person or thing from danger, injury, or destruction of any

kind whatever. A house may be saved from the flames, or a ship from the waves. A man may be saved from poverty, shame, disease or death. But the question before us relates to a salvation that is infinitely greater than any or all of these. Man as a sinner is in a state of condemnation, and so long as he remains in this sinful, condemned state, just so long is he "without God and without hope" in this world, and exposed to "everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of his power" in the world to come.

To be saved in this world, is to be cleansed from all past sins, freed from condemnation, filled with peace and joy, and sustained and cheered by the hope of eternal life. This is the great object which the gospel of Christ sets before the sinner.

To be saved in the world to come, is to be raised from dead, acknowledged by the Lord Jesus Christ, clothed with immortality, and gifted with "an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading." This is the great object which the gospel of Christ sets before the Christian.

It is to the *first* of these as preparatory to the *second* that the question before us directly relates. Let us now briefly sum up the points presented in this all-important question; for every word is full of meaning and in turn wonderfully emphatic.

1. Man is *lost* in sin; hence the question is, What must I do to be *saved*?

2. Man *can not save himself*; hence the question is, What must I do *to be saved*?

3. *Action* on the part of man is essential to the *enjoyment* of pardon; hence the question is, What must I *do* to be saved?

4. When conviction seizes the heart, man is filled with a sense of his own personal danger and responsi-

bility; hence the question is, What must *I* do to be saved? Place the emphasis on *I* and let it be a heartfelt emphasis.

5. Man under conviction feels and realizes the *necessity* of doing what God requires him to do; hence the question is, What *must* I do to be saved?

6. Man cannot by his own reason answer this question for himself. On it philosophy deposeth not, science is silent, and all nature is dumb. If answered at all, it must be by a revelation from on high. Man is in *ignorance* and darkness; hence the question is, *What*, oh, *what* must I do to be saved?

II. THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

I have attempted to place the great question before you in its proper light, to impress your hearts with its superlative importance, and to briefly note the great truths implied in it. I now invite you to seek with me the answer to this question in which is involved our happiness for time and for eternity. But whither shall we go for that answer in which we can repose full confidence without any misgiving of mind or heart—that answer which shall be at once correct, authoritative, and final beyond the possibility of cavil? There can be but one response to this query, and that is, “*To the law and to the testimony.*”

“*The Oracles of God*” are the only source of instruction in divine things. They alone are able to make us wise unto salvation. On all questions that relate to our spiritual interests and obligations, they contain full and satisfactory information. In them, God “hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue.” Therefore they are both authoritative and final.

It was to save men, that “the Word was made flesh,” and thus became the Son of God and the Son of Man, in which twofold character He lived and labored, suffered and

died, was buried and rose again, ascended up on high and was crowned Lord of all.

It was to save men, that the Holy Spirit revealed "the truth as it is in Jesus" through prophets, apostles and evangelists.

It was to save men, that the apostles were sent out into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature.

In a word, the salvation of sinners is the design of all the labors and sufferings of Christ, the purpose of all revealed truth, the object of all the efforts and prayers of all the apostles and evangelists. Then to the Inspired Record let us go with humility and reverence, prepared to receive whatever answer may be given to this, the greatest of all questions.

1. Our first appeal is to the Commission given by Christ to the apostles as he was about to leave them and ascend up into heaven. The unique and solemn circumstances under which it was given, the magnitude and grandeur of the objects contemplated in it, and the peerless rank and dignity of its author,—all tend to invest it with pre-eminent importance. It is the Great Charter of human redemption, and if the assurance of salvation can not be found here, it can not be found at all. According to Mark's testimony the Savior said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Mark 16:15-16. R. V.

Here we find a direct, positive, and unequivocal answer to the great question in the words of Jesus himself. "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," says the Messiah in view of His investiture with all authority in heaven and on earth. Anxious inquirer, earnest seeker of salvation, are you prepared to receive this declaration of the Lord Jesus Christ as a final settlement of this vital question? Are you willing to take Jesus at His

word, to do what He requires—nothing more and nothing less—and then look to Him for the pardon of past sins, and for the assurance of heaven and eternal happiness? These are questions which you must decide for yourself; but before you decide I ask you to bear in mind the fact that this is not *my* answer to this question. It is not the answer of any man, or any assembly or council of men. It is not such an answer as human wisdom would have given, nor is human wisdom satisfied with it when given. It is the solemn declaration of the Lord of life, the Prince of salvation, and this is enough for me. If any man is not satisfied with it, his controversy is not with me, but with its Divine Author.

I shall not pause here to answer objections, nor shall I attempt to show why peace and pardon are offered on these terms. It is my duty as a faithful servant to deliver the message of the Lord, and to make known the terms on which He offers pardon to the rebellious. It is your privilege to receive or reject the message, to determine for yourself whether or not you will accept the pardon on the terms proposed. If you refuse to hear the message, if you reject the proffered mercy, you do so at your own peril, and with the Lord himself you must finally settle the question. But before you decide to reject this answer to this great question, let me entreat you to consider well another declaration of the Savior: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” John 12:48.

2. In the discourse of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, we find a second answer to the great question. By the preaching of the apostle on that occasion, many were convicted of their own sin in rejecting and crucifying the Messiah. Cut in their hearts, they said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38. This is a plain and direct answer to the question; but was Peter authorized to answer it at all, and, if so, is his answer correct?

On looking into the history of the case, we learn that the apostles had been commissioned only a few days before to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and now for the first time, Peter is speaking in the name of Christ under this commission. Is not the conclusion inevitable, that he thoroughly understood the commission under which he was acting, and that he strictly followed the instructions of his exalted and glorified Lord and Savior?

In addition to this, Peter in company with the other apostles had received the promised "power from on high" had been "baptized in the Holy Spirit," and was thus enabled to answer this question authoritatively and infallibly. The Holy Spirit with which they were filled was, in accordance with the promise of the Savior, to bring to their remembrance all things that He had said to them, and also to guide them into all the truth. It was then under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that Peter spoke on the day of Pentecost. Indeed, it was the Holy Spirit that spoke through Peter and the other apostles; for "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." We have then in this response, not only the answer of Peter to the great question, but also the answer of the Holy Spirit.

To Peter the Savior had committed the keys of the kingdom with the assurance that whatever he bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. To him was thus

given the exalted privilege of opening the doors of the kingdom of heaven, both to the Jews and Gentiles, by authoritatively promulgating the law of pardon under the gospel dispensation.

The statement of the case then is this: Peter, an apostle, commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ, possessing the keys of the kingdom and speaking by direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, answers the earnest, heartfelt question, "What shall we do?" by saying, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." After this statement, is it necessary that I should add anything more on this passage? I only ask, will you be taught by the Holy Spirit? Will you be persuaded by the apostle? Or will you reject the wisdom and authority of the one, the exhortations and entreaties of the other, and turn away to the delusive philosophy of fallible men?

3. In the history of Saul's conversion, we find a third answer to the question before us. There are three accounts of this case of conversion in *Acts of Apostles*, the first given by Luke, the second and third by Paul himself, found respectively in the 5th, 22d., and 26th chapters. Each of these must be carefully studied in connection with both the others, in order to a full and correct understanding of this important and interesting case of conversion.

The leading facts may be briefly stated. While Saul was on his way to Damascus for the purpose of arresting the disciples of Jesus, and bringing them bound to Jerusalem that they might be punished, he was himself suddenly arrested by the glorious appearance of Jesus in person. "A light from heaven above the brightness of the sun" shone around him, and when he had fallen to the earth, he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He inquired, "Who art thou Lord?" The

voice replied, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest?" As the truth flashes athwart his mind that the crucified Nazarene is indeed and in truth the Son of God, conviction pierces his heart, his guilt in rejecting the true Messiah and persecuting His disciples to the death, rises up before him in appalling magnitude, and in anguish of spirit and humility of heart, he cries, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"

Strange as it may appear to some, the Lord did not directly answer his question, that is, He did not tell him what to do to be saved. He only directed him to the place where he could get the desired information. "Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." From this direction of the Savior and other statements in the history of the case, we may learn why He himself did not then and there answer Saul's question by telling him what to do to be saved.

In the first place, the *Way of Salvation* through Christ had already been revealed, and the apostles and others had been sent out into the world to preach the gospel to every creature. The kingdom had been opened years before at Jerusalem, and the terms of pardon had then and there been set forth to "devout men out of every nation under heaven." All things necessary for man to do in order to his own personal enjoyment of pardon, had been *appointed* by God, *revealed* by the Holy Spirit, and *made known* by the apostles. And as the "ministry of reconciliation" had been committed to the apostles and other chosen ministers, the Savior, though now visibly and audibly present, will not by answering this question take out of their hands the work which He himself had given them to do. From an humble disciple, yet a chosen and inspired teacher, must Saul of Tarsus learn what he must do to be saved.

This fact is worthy of the most serious consideration at the present day. It is not by supernatural visions, nocturnal dreams, nor aerial whispers, that we are to learn the way of life and salvation; but from the recorded teaching of the apostles and evangelists of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident from the entire history of the case that Jesus did not come down from heaven for the purpose of telling Saul what to do to be saved, or of giving him the evidence of pardon; for He did neither. Whoever then expects to see Jesus personally, or to hear Him speak audibly, will be miserably disappointed. And he who pretends to have had such a vision as Saul of Tarsus had on his way to Damascus, is either a wretched dupe, or a wicked impostor.

In the second place, the special purpose for which Jesus appeared to Saul, is plainly and pointedly stated by the Lord himself. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts 26:16-18.

It was then for the express purpose of making Saul a *minister* and a *witness* that Jesus appeared to him as he did. This object could be accomplished by no other means. Any well informed disciple could tell Saul what had been appointed for him to do in order to his own personal enjoyment of salvation; but only the Lord Jesus Christ from the throne of His glory could make him an apostle. The special work of the apostles was to testify to the resurrection of Jesus. That they might be able to do this, it was necessary for them to see Him after He arose from the

dead, and to hear Him speak. This was absolutely essential, because a witness can testify to that only which he has seen and heard, not that which he had heard reported by others, but that which he had seen with his own eyes, and heard with his own ears. Hence to the apostles whom He had chosen, Jesus showed Himself alive after His passion—His sufferings of death—by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God. Acts 1:3. And as it was His purpose to make Saul of Tarsus an apostle, that is a witness of His resurrection, it was necessary that He should appear to him in a visible form, and speak to him in an audible voice. This is placed beyond all doubt by what Ananias said to Saul: "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of His mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." Acts 22:14:15. But Saul was a sinner, even the chief of sinners. Being convicted of sin he felt his need of pardon, and it was to this point that his anxious question was directed. But since, as we have already seen, all things appointed for sinners to do, had been fully revealed to chosen ministers, whose duty and privilege it was to make the same known to all nations, to every creature, in order to the obedience of faith, Saul is sent to one of these teachers for that instruction which Christ in person would not give to him. Though called to be an apostle, he must be saved as all other sinners are saved under the gospel. He must observe every item of the law of pardon, that he may enjoy the remission of sins. Hence the direction:—"Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Acts 9:5. Let us follow him thither, and hear the answer which he received.

After three days which were spent in fasting and

prayer, Ananias stands before him, states the purpose of his own visit, makes known the object of the Lord's appearance to him on the way, and concludes with this earnest and urgent exhortation, "and now, why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord." Acts 22:16. Here is found the answer to Saul's heartfelt question,—“Lord what wilt thou have me to do?” If it is not found here it can not be found at all. Jesus assured Saul that in the city of Damascus it should be told him what he must do, and this is the answer of the teacher whom Christ sent to instruct him. If Ananias told him anything else the Holy Spirit has failed to place it on record.

I shall not turn aside here to answer objections. I shall not notice the pitiful sophistry and petty quibbling of those who try to evade the force of this plain and pointed exhortation of an inspired teacher. The facts of the case have been fairly stated. The question is,—“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The answer is—“Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” This is a part of the teaching of the Holy Spirit on the subject of salvation or remission of sins, and having laid before you the facts of the case, I leave you to dispose of them as you think proper. To the Lord your judge must you give account for the manner in which you treat His word.

4. The history of the Philippian jailer's conversion furnishes a fourth answer to the great question. Paul and Silas had visited the city of Philippi, preaching the gospel of Christ. Incurring the displeasure of the populace and of the magistrates, they are arrested, beaten, and imprisoned. The jailer is charged to keep them safely, in order to which they are thrust into the inner prison, and their feet are made fast in the stocks: But God is watching His faithful servants, He hears their midnight prayers and

songs of thankfulness, and sends an earthquake for their release. The foundations of the prison are shaken, the doors are opened, and the fetters are loosed. The jailer awakening, seeing the doors opened, and supposing that his prisoners had all fled, drew his sword and would have killed himself, had not the voice of Paul arrested his arm, and assured him of the safety of his entire charge. "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said,—“Sirs, What must I do to be saved?” And they said,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Acts 16:29:31.

As this is the answer which almost all Protestants give to all persons under all circumstances, I will not notice it farther at present than to say that I heartily accept it as an inspired answer to the great question, and to just such a character as the Philippian jailer, I would give precisely the same answer now, and then endeavor to follow the example of Paul and Silas by speaking unto him “the word of the Lord.”

III. THE ANSWERS HARMONIZED AND UNITIZED.

I have now adduced four answers to the great question.

1. Christ in the commission says,—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

2. Peter says to the convicted Jews,—“Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins.”

3. Ananias says to the penitent Saul,—“Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

4. Paul and Silas say to the frightened jailer,—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”

It is apparent at a glance that each of these answers

differs from all the others. Is not this a startling fact? Does it not embarrass the investigation of the subject with the most serious difficulty? Shall we hence conclude that the Holy Scriptures contradict themselves? Must we infer that the Savior of men teaches one thing, and the Holy Spirit another? And worse still, must we infer that the Holy Spirit teaches one thing by Peter, another by Ananias, and still another by Paul and Silas? These inferences might do for a skeptic; but they cannot be received by a Christian, nor will they satisfy an earnest inquirer after the truth.

The "Spirit of Truth" did not contradict either himself or Christ.

Shall we then conclude that there are four methods of saving men revealed in the New Testament? Does God save one class of men by faith and baptism to the exclusion of all other conditions; a second class by repentance and baptism; a third class by baptism alone; and a fourth class by faith alone? This would involve the whole subject in the most perplexing uncertainty. For, on such a hypothesis as this, it would be impossible for any man to ascertain the peculiar conditions of his own salvation. Such a supposition as this is derogatory to the character of God, and productive of the greatest confusion; for under such a fourfold scheme as this, how could any one feel the full assurance of faith that his sins had been pardoned? It is as clear as a sunbeam from the Scriptures of truth, that there is but one way by which men may be saved. To my mind it is a self-evident truth that conversion is the same in all cases. It is always produced by the same means, it always embraces the same steps, and is always attended with the same blessings.

Whatever is really necessary in one case in order to conversion, must also be necessary in all other cases; for "God is no respecter of persons." Then let no man de-

lude himself with the fallacious idea that he can be saved in some special way. As there is but one name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved, so there is but one way revealed by which we can enter into that name, and thus enjoy the benefits of Christ's death and mediation. But then the answers that we have found to the great question are not the same. This is a fact which cannot be disputed. How then are we to dispose of this difficulty?

I am happy to think that the difficulty in this case, as in many others, is more apparent than real. Indeed the difficulties that stand in the way of the proper understanding of the Scriptures, are generally in the mind of the reader and not in the Scriptures at all. Many persons read the Bible expecting, whenever any subject is mentioned, to find a distinct and formal enumeration of every thing connected therewith. Others read as though they expected to find a whole system of theology in every chapter at least, if not in every verse. Now it is just as impossible for the Bible to teach every thing at one time and in one place, as it is for other books; and no one expects such an impossible feat of any other book. If all truth could have been presented in one chapter or one verse, then a single chapter or a solitary verse would have been sufficient for the religious wants of the world in all time. The revelations of the Holy Spirit were not all made at one time or in one way but "at sundry times and in divers manners." They were given out in small portions from time to time as the world needed them and was prepared to receive them.

It should always be borne in mind that in all the Bible there is no attempt at any thing like a formal or systematic arrangement of truth on any question. Hence we never find all the teaching of the Holy Spirit on any important subject in any one place, but scattered often through many books. We have here a little and there a

little; a fact in one place and an illustration in another; a command here, a promise there, and an admonition somewhere else, but all bearing on the same subject. Hence; in order to a full and correct understanding of the Bible on any question, we must bring together and carefully study all that the Holy Spirit has revealed on that particular subject in all the Sacred Writings. If we take only a part of the Spirit's teaching on any subject, we have only a part of the truth on that subject, and partial or half truths often become the means of introducing and perpetuating the most pernicious errors.

The different answers to the great question can be easily harmonized. There is but one way, however, by which it can be done. It cannot be done by taking any one of them to the exclusion of the others and making what is enjoined in that one the only condition of pardon. This would be to reject a part of the testimony of God, throw suspicion on the whole, and sap the very foundation of the citadel of truth.

The only way by which these equally inspired declarations can be harmonized, is to take them all together, and regard each as an essential part of one and the same plan of salvation. Each of them must be understood and explained in accordance with all the facts which can be learned from the context, and also from other passages of Scripture which have a bearing on the same subject. They must not be regarded as different plans of salvation, but only as different parts of the same plan. Each of the items mentioned in these passages, has its own appropriate place in the plan of salvation, which place was assigned to it by God himself, and from which it can not be removed without laying violent hands on God's word, marring the beauty of the gospel scheme, and neutralizing to a great extent the power of the truth. It is susceptible of the clearest proof that not one of these declarations was

intended to be a full and formal statement of everything which a sinner must do in order to be saved. Each was specially adapted to the spiritual condition of the party to whom it was addressed, and was intended for them and such as they only. This is the clue to the right understanding of the whole matter. A careful study of the context, and special attention to the character of the person or persons addressed in each case will divest the whole subject of even the shadow of a difficulty, and at the same time set forth the gospel plan of pardon in all its simplicity, unity, symmetry and power. In the light of these principles, let us now carefully examine each of these inspired declarations.

I. THE COMMISSION.

In all our inquiries concerning the law of pardon under the Christian dispensation, the Commission should be our starting point. Although it was not directly addressed to inquiring sinners, yet it contains, as we have already seen, a direct answer to the great question. This answer, or statement rather, is necessarily expressed in general terms which are alike applicable to all who hear the gospel in every age of the world. There are four records, however, of this Divine commission, each of which contains some important matter omitted by all the others. They give respectively what Jesus said at different times, and also in different parts of the same discourse. By combining all these records, we get a general outline of the proclamation that was to go forth to all the nations, which is amply sufficient for our direction in every case which may occur, especially when explained and exemplified by the preaching and practice of the apostles on and after the day of Pentecost. Let us examine each of these records separately, note the different items embraced in it, and then collect them all in one general statement. I quote now from the Revised Testament.

Matthew's Record. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

This commission was given on a mountain in Galilee two or three weeks after He arose from the dead, and is a summary of what He had previously said to them. It enjoins on the apostles and all other preachers the following things:

1st. To make disciples of all the nations. This necessitated the preaching of the gospel to all men, for only by this means could disciples be made.

2nd. To baptize them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This necessarily involved on the part of the baptized a cordial acceptance of the gospel, and a voluntary submission to the supreme authority of Jesus.

3rd. To teach the baptized to observe all things which He had commanded them. This was in order to the development and enjoyment of their Christian character. On these conditions they had the assurance of the abiding presence of their Lord and Savior.

Mark's Record: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." This was spoken to the eleven on His first appearance to them after He arose from the dead. In these words we find some things not so distinctly stated elsewhere, though clearly implied.

1st. The preaching of the gospel. By this means men were to be enlightened, convicted, and persuaded.

2nd. Belief of the gospel—faith—the turning of the heart to God.

3rd. Baptism, an act of faith accepting the overtures of mercy.

4th. Salvation, that is the enjoyment of peace and pardon.

5th. The condemnation of those who reject the proffered mercy.

Luke's Record: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." In this statement we find:—

1st. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus which are the fundamental facts of the gospel which was to be preached to all nations.

2nd. Repentance to be preached in the name of Jesus.

3rd. Remission of sins to be offered through the name of Jesus.

John's Record: "Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosesoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." This is simply the grant of authority to the apostles to make known the plan of salvation through their risen Lord and Savior. If we wish to know how they forgave or remitted sins on the one hand, and how they retained sins on the other, that is, what conditions they enjoined on men as essential to the enjoyment of pardon, we must consult the history of their labors in preaching the gospel and introducing men and women into the kingdom of God's Son.

By combining the records of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, to all of which John's record is the preface or introduction, we get the whole commission at one view.

1st. Making disciples, (Mat.), by preaching the gospel, (Mark), or by announcing the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ, (Luke.)

2nd. Faith, or the belief of the gospel, (Mark.)

- 3rd. Repentance, (Luke.)
- 4th. Baptism, (Matthew and Mark.)
- 5th. Salvation, (Mark,) or remission of sins, (Luke.)
- 6th. The observance of all things commanded, (Matthew.)
- 7th. The condemnation of the disbeliever, (Mark.)
- 8th. The abiding power of the Savior until the consummation of the gospel age, (Matthew.)

Such is the *Great Commission* in all its fulness. This commission is the great *Law of Pardon* to the alien under the *Christian Dispensation*. It was this that Isaiah had in view when he said, "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In the light of this great charter of man's redemption, let us examine the other passages already adduced, ascertain the character, that is the spiritual condition, of the inquirer in each case, and learn how the apostles and evangelists understood and applied their own commission.

II. PETER'S RESPONSE TO THE CONVICTED JEWS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST.

"Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

In this response only two things are enjoined on the inquirers in order to the remission of their sins. These two things are repentance and baptism. Must we infer from this fact that faith was not included in their case as a condition of pardon? Certainly not, for this would be contrary to the express teaching of other passages of scripture, in direct violation of that part of the commission which reads, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieves shall be condemned." In Hebrews it is written, "And without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto Him, for he that cometh to God must

believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him."

Why then did not Peter command these inquiring Jews to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as Paul did the the Philippian jailer? Must it not have been because they did not need this command? Is it not evident from the very face of the narrative, that they already believed? Had they not heard the gospel? Had they not witnessed its confirmation by what they saw and heard? Had they not been cut to the heart by the sword of the Spirit? Were they not already convinced that God had made that same Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ? Was it not under an overwhelming sense of their guilt that they cried out and said, "Brethren what shall we do?" Is this the language of doubt or unbelief? Surely not. Their question itself and the earnestness with which it was uttered, fully satisfied the apostle with reference to their hearty belief of all that he had said. Instead then of commanding them to do what they had already done, he gave them an answer precisely suited to their spiritual condition at that time. It was as if he had said to them, "You are now convinced that Jesus is the Christ, you feel that you are guilty of crucifying the Lord of glory, you earnestly desire to know what you must do in order to be saved; therefore repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

This case of conversion is invested with a peculiar interest from the fact that it is the first case that occurred after the exaltation of Jesus as the Messiah. Hundreds of years before Isaiah had said,—“Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” On the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, on mount Zion was this prophecy fulfilled. On that day for the first time was the law of pardon through Christ proclaimed to

“Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven.” From Jerusalem as a radiating center, “the Word of the Lord,” the glad tidings of salvation went forth to all the nations of earth. We also have in this case of conversion a practical and striking exemplification of the commission by that apostle to whom the keys of the kingdom were first committed.

1st. Peter preached the gospel, the death, burial, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus whom the Jews had rejected and by the lawless hands of Romans had crucified and slain.

2nd. Many were cut to the heart—were convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, and made sensible of their deep guilt in putting Him to death. In other words, they believed the gospel which Peter had preached, and manifested their faith by inquiring what they should do.

3rd. They are commanded to repent.

4th. They are commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus Chrst.

5th. They are assured of the remission of sins and of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

6th. Three thousand gladly received the word and were baptized, and then continued steadfastly in the observance of all things commanded.

7. The power of the Lord was with them all as He had promised.

8. Those who refused to receive the word were left in a state of condemnation. This case of conversion is thus seen to be in exact accordance with the commission.

III. THE EXHORTATION OF ANANIAS TO SAUL.

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name.” Here Saul of Tarsus, formerly a self-righteous Pharisee and a raging persecutor, is commanded simply to be baptized

and wash away his sins, calling on the name of Jesus. How are we to explain this fact? Was not the gifted pupil of Gamaliel required to believe on Jesus as God's anointed? He himself has taught us that "without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto God." Must not he, the chief of sinners, repent? He has himself declared that God "commands all men everywhere to repent." Why then was he commanded only to be baptized? Simply because he had both believed and repented when Ananias addressed him. He had seen Jesus in His glory and power. He had been stricken to the earth and smitten with blindness by the light that burst upon him. He had heard this glorified One declare, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest."

Here was the whole gospel in one brief sentence, taken in connection with what Saul already knew. He knew that Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified by His own people because He claimed to be the Christ; and now he sees Him in glory and hears His voice. The very moment in which he hears Him say, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest," his enmity is slain, faith takes possession of his heart, and he humbly asks, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do." He now not only believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, but he also knows that God has raised Him from the dead, for he has seen Him alive and heard Him speak. His earnest question is a recognition of the Messiahship of Jesus, and an evidence of his own faith and repentance.

Three days after this, the Lord commands Ananias to go to Saul, and assigns as a reason, "for behold he prayeth." What stronger proof could we have that Saul of Tarsus is now both a firm believer in Jesus as the Christ, and an humble penitent at the foot of the cross, seeking peace and pardon. Hence, when Ananias comes, he simply announces the object of the Lord's appearance to him by the way,

and exhorts him not to tarry, but to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord, thus casting all his care on Him who died and rose again. In this case we find:

1. The gospel proclaimed by the Lord himself.
2. Saul's immediate and cordial reception of the truth.

3. His prayerful repentance.

4. His baptism.

5. The washing away of his sins—remission.

6. And then his life-long labors and unparalleled sufferings manifest his devotion to Christ, and his observance of all his Lord's commandments. How beautifully this case of conversion harmonizes with the commission, and also with the conversion of the Jews on the day of Pentecost.

IV. THE REPLY OF PAUL AND SILAS TO THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.” Here again but one thing is enjoined on the inquirer, but this time it is faith in Christ. Are we hence to infer that this was all that was required of him, and that he was saved by faith alone, that is faith to the exclusion of everything else? We think not. This would be as hasty and incorrect as to suppose from the exhortation of Ananias that Saul was saved by baptism alone. It would be contrary to the express requirements of the commission, and at variance with the teaching of Peter when he opened the doors of the kingdom to the Jews at the beginning. Why then was the jailer commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, while Saul was commanded to be baptized in answer to the same question?

The reason can be found only in the difference be-

tween the spiritual condition of the two men at the time at which the answers were given. Saul, as we have already seen, was a penitent, praying believer when he was commanded to be baptized. But who and what was the jailer? He was an ignorant and alarmed Pagan. He not only did not believe at this time, but did not know what to believe. He was unacquainted with the character and claims of Jesus. He had no knowledge of the gospel plan of pardon. Hence he was in the first place directed to Christ as the Savior of sinful men. But his heaven-sent teachers did not stop at this, for it is immediately added. "And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, and to all that were in his house." The Holy Spirit did not see fit to put on record the discourse that was delivered to the jailer and his house, nor was it necessary. It is sufficient for us to know that they spake unto him the Word of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord is an expression which has a definite meaning in the New Testament. The Word of the Lord is always the same, it matters not when or by whom spoken. The Word of the Lord is found in the Commission and in the first discourse of the Apostle Peter. The Word of the Lord is the gospel which the Savior commanded to be preached unto all the nations. Therefore the Word of the Lord which went forth from Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost is the Word of the Lord which Paul and Silas spoke to the Philippian jailer and his household. This position is confirmed by the subsequent part of the narrative. It is said, "that he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his, immediately." From this it is evident that the Word of the Lord according to Paul and Silas had baptism in it. Whoever, therefore leaves baptism out, does not speak the Word of the Lord fully, and to that extent is an unfaithful servant. The faith that brought salvation to the Philippian jailer, was a faith that

led him down into the water in humble obedience to the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The conversion of the Ethiopian is a parallel case, and still further illustrates and confirms the position taken here. See Acts 8:27-40. It is simply said that Philip began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. But as a result of this preaching it is recorded that "as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, 'Behold here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?'" This shows conclusively that in preaching Jesus to him, Philip had taught him that it was his duty to be baptized. Indeed it is here fearlessly affirmed that after the day of Pentecost no inspired teacher ever preached Jesus, or spoke the word of the Lord to an unpardoned man without enjoining on him baptism as well as faith and repentance. Nor should this surprise any one, for it is in exact accordance with the commission,—"Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them." To preach Jesus and leave baptism out is in direct violation of the commandment of Christ, and contrary to the example of the apostles and other inspired preachers.

We find then that the conversion of the Philippian jailer is, so far as conversion goes, precisely like all other cases on record.

1. Paul and Silas spake unto him the word of the Lord.
2. He believed in God with all his house.
3. He repented; for he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes.
4. He was baptized, he and all his, immediately.
5. He was evidently pardoned; for he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Here the curtain drops on the history of the jailer, and we know nothing of his subsequent life,—nothing of his hopes and fears, of his joys and sorrows, of his toils

and triumphs; but we trust that he held "the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end." So far, however, as his conversion is concerned, it was in exact accordance with the commission and the word of the Lord that went forth from Jerusalem.

IV. CONCLUSION.

We have seen that conversion is the same in all cases, and that each of the answers to the great question which we have quoted, was especially adapted to the spiritual condition of the inquirer at that precise point of time. This being so, it follows that the way of salvation is so plain that the wayfaring man, though a simpleton, need not err therein. We have simply to ascertain the character, the spiritual condition, of the inquirer in any case, and then give to him the answer which the Holy Spirit has left on record for all such as he.

Should any one who has never heard the gospel ask me what he must do to be saved, I would tell him as Paul told the jailer, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. But I would not stop at this. I would speak unto him the Word of the Lord. I would preach unto him Jesus. I would tell him that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and that He came into the world to save sinners like himself. I would describe His life of labor and love, as He went about doing good, healing the sick, comforting the distressed, opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, casting out demons, and raising the dead. I would relate His sufferings, that He was despised and rejected by men, and for our sake even smitten and afflicted of God—that He was arraigned before the council as a blasphemer, and before Pilate as an adventurer—that in His trial justice was denied Him—that He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and amid the insults and mockeries of heartless foes, poured out His blood on the ignominious

cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. I would tell of His lowly burial, of His triumphant resurrection, of His glorious ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God. And then I would read to him the commission in which the risen Messiah commanded His apostles to go into all the world and bear the glad tidings of salvation to every creature, offering peace and pardon and hope to all who would cordially embrace the truth, turn away from their sins, and submit to His authority. And now if the heart of my hearer was touched by this simple recital of the great facts of the gospel, if he was willing to put all his trust in Jesus, relying wholly on His promise and power to save, I would take him the same hour of the day or the night, and baptize him into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Again, should one who has heard the gospel and believed it, one who has been cut to the heart by the truth as it is in Jesus, ask me what he must do to be saved, I would reply in the words of Peter, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus unto the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Finally, should one who has not only heard and believed the gospel, but has also repented of his sins and turned to the Lord in heart, one who is manifestly a praying penitent seeking peace and pardon, ask me what he must do to be saved, I would not hesitate to say to him as Ananias did to Saul, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on His name"—that name through which "whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins."

Dare any one say that in each of these cases, I would not give that answer which is specially adapted to the spiritual condition of the inquirer—that answer which was revealed by the Holy Spirit for him, and for all such in every succeeding age of the world? And if these an-

swers are correct in each case, then how plain is the gospel plan of pardon! It is so plain that whoever reads may run joyfully in the pathway of obedience.

There are three classes of men and women out of Christ,—(1.) unbelievers, (2.) believers, and (3.) praying penitent believers; and the Holy Spirit through the recorded teaching of the apostles and evangelists, furnishes us with an answer adapted to each of these classes.

The *Unbeliever* is commanded to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he may know what to believe, the Word of the Lord is spoken to him; and when he hears and receives the word he is baptized straightway.

Believers—those who have heard the Word of the Lord and been cut to the heart by it, are commanded to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins; and all who gladly receive this word are baptized and added to the Lord the same day.

The *Penitent Believer* is commanded to “arise, and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on His name”—the name of the Lord.

As it was in the days of the apostles, so it should be now.

Does the inquirer still ask, “What must I do to be saved?” To give a general answer that will embrace all classes and characters, I reply:— You must believe with all of your heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of the living God, cordially embracing all the great facts involved in this fundamental proposition; you must repent of all your sins by turning away from them with a firm resolve to sin no more; and then on a confession of your faith in Jesus as the Christ, you must be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Thus through the mercy of God you will be cleansed from all sin by the blood of Jesus, translated out

of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, made a child of God and an heir of eternal life. You will then have God for your Father, the Lord Jesus Christ for your elder brother and redeemer, the Holy Spirit for your comforter, the Holy Scriptures for your guide, and the purest and holiest men and women on earth for fellow-citizens and fellow-heirs in the kingdom and patience of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. With the favor of God to help us in every time of need, you will only have to hold fast your confidence and the rejoicing of your hopes firm unto the end, to receive a crown of life that will fade not away.

Dear, dying friend, embrace the truth with all your heart, turn away from sin, come to Jesus, put all your trust in Him, cast all your care on Him, and henceforth live in and for Him who died to redeem you from sin and death. God says, Come! Christ says, Come! The Spirit says, Come! The Church says, Come! And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Most gracious promise! Will you come?

“Hear, O sinner! mercy hails you,
 Now with sweetest voice she calls;
 • Bids you haste to seek the Savior;
 Ere the hand of justice falls:
 Trust in Jesus;
 'Tis the voice of mercy calls.

Haste, O sinner! to the Savior—
 Seek His mercy while you may;
 Soon the day of grace is over;
 Soon your life will pass away!
 Haste to Jesus;
 You must perish if you stay.”

Fourteenth Sermon.

BAPTISM. WHAT IS IT?

“Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. 28:19-20.

Baptism from a controversial standpoint is certainly a great wonder, if not in deed an inexplicable mystery. John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the promised Messiah and the herald of His approaching reign, inaugurated his own preparatory work by preaching “the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins.” The land of Judea was shaken from its center to its circumference; and great multitudes from Jerusalem, from all parts of Judea, and from the region along the Jordan, came unto him, and “were baptized in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.” Soon the Messiah himself appeared, was baptized by John, acknowledged by the Father, and soon afterward entered on His own personal ministry. It is said of Jesus that He “made and baptized more disciples than John,” hence the number must have been very great.

Thus the work of reformation, which had been begun by John with so many tokens of divine approval, was carried on still more successfully by Jesus down to the close of His public ministry on earth. After He arose from the dead, and had shown Himself alive to the apostles and other chosen witnesses, convincing them by many infallible proofs of the reality of His resurrection, and explaining to them the necessity of all the wonderful events that had occurred so unexpectedly to them, He gave to them their world-wide and age-lasting commission, in which He

commanded them to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and promised to be with them always, even "unto the consummation of the age." He thus made baptism an institution of universal and perpetual obligation.

On the day of Pentecost the apostles were "clothed with power from on high," and began the work which their risen Lord had given them to do. Three thousand souls, pierced in their hearts with conviction of their own sin in crucifying the Lord of glory, "gladly received the word" spoken by the apostles, and were baptized in the name of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. In a few days the number was increased to five thousand; and shortly afterward we read that "the number of disciples in Jerusalem multiplied exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith," all of whom were of course baptized.

When the disciples were driven out of Jerusalem by persecution, they went about preaching the word, and baptizing all who received it, as Philip did at Samaria. A few years afterward, we see the apostles and their co-laborers going throughout Judea and other parts of the Roman empire, preaching alike to Jew and Gentile, presenting Jesus as the Son of God and the only Savior of men, and baptizing all who received their testimony and turned away from their previous sinful life.

These things were not done secretly, but openly, boldly, and publicly. The baptisms performed by John were conspicuously public. The much greater number of baptisms performed by the apostles could not all of them have been private, if indeed any of them were, of which we have no evidence whatever. Within one generation then, hundreds of thousands of the best and most intelligent men and women on earth were baptized by the dis-

ciples of Jesus, not in out-of-the-way places, but in the great centers of trade, of learning, and of influence, as Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Thessalonica, and even Rome itself, the metropolis of the world.

Now from the time when John the harbinger performed his first baptism down to the death of John the apostle, there was no controversy, with regard to the administrator, the subject, the action, or the design of baptism. Indeed there could have been none. The apostles certainly knew who baptized them, what act was performed, and for what it was done. They certainly knew what they themselves did when by the authority of their Master, they baptized the disciples made by Him; and they must have known what was the object or design of baptism in all these cases. They knew therefore beyond the possibility of a doubt just what the risen Savior meant when He said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them," etc.; and in all the baptisms which they performed, they certainly did just what the Savior commanded them to do.

Not only did the apostles know these things, but the many thousands who were baptized from the beginning of John's ministry to the end of the apostolic age, unquestionably knew the same things. Indeed, all who witnessed these many baptisms through nearly three score years and ten, absolutely knew what was done, by whom done, and on whom done, for all these things—the act, the subject, and the administrator—they saw with their own eyes, and there could have been no doubt or dispute concerning any of them. Even idle spectators must have learned something concerning the design of so peculiar and significant an institution; while the subjects themselves must have clearly understood for what purpose they were baptized.

Had we lived in the days of the apostles, could we

have believed that the time would ever come, when every point connected with the institution of baptism would become a matter of protracted and bitter controversy; and that even the perpetuity of the institution itself would be denied? We certainly would have deemed it in the highest degree improbable, if not absolutely impossible, that such a controversy should ever arise. But strange as it may seem in view of all the facts presented, this controversy is upon us, and in some of its phases has been raging for more than fifteen hundred years.

Within a few generations after the death of the apostles, this institution so clearly and so authoritatively enacted by the Savior, and so fully set forth and exemplified in the teaching and practice of the apostles—this institution in which there is an open, public avowal of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a voluntary submission to His supreme authority—became a vexed question, and has so continued to the present day. On every point connected with it, men have differed as widely as men can differ; and as the controversy continues, they seem, if it be possible, to get farther and farther apart. How long this strange unseemly, unchristian, and sinful controversy is to continue, only the Lord knows.

The main points now at issue respecting the action, the subject, and the design of this institution; although in some quarters the proper administrator is still a mooted question, and one sect at least rejects baptism in water altogether. Surely baptism is the greatest wonder of all the Christian centuries, or else men have tampered with and changed this institution, on which the Savior inscribed for all coming time the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

In the discourses preceding this, we think that both the subject and the design of baptism were clearly presented in the light of scriptural teaching, in which light

we desire ever to walk. In this present discourse, we raise the single question, "What is baptism?" This question may be variously answered according to the standpoint from which it is viewed.

Regarding its character, we may say that baptism is a divine institution which was solemnly enacted by the Lord Jesus Christ to be observed by all scriptural subjects throughout the Gospel age. Looking at the subject solely from a modern ecclesiastical standpoint, many are doubtless ready to say that baptism is a rite or ceremony, by which a person is inducted into some religious society or church.

That baptism is a divine institution, supported by the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, is in our judgment beyond all question; and that it is much more than a mere rite or ceremony by which persons are inducted into some ecclesiastical organization, we are firmly persuaded. It is needless to discuss the first of these propositions, and would be profitless to discuss the second.

The question which we now raise has reference to that which constitutes baptism itself, that which is done when any one is baptized. Hence at the very outset of the investigation, we will endeavor to place the true issue before the mind of our readers. The question presented does not relate to the mode or manner of doing what the Lord commanded, but to the very thing itself that is to be done. We propose therefore to investigate, not the mode of baptism, but baptism itself. The expression, *mode of baptism*, so often used by speakers and writers on this subject, is misleading in the highest degree. It turns the mind away from the true issue, and presents, unintentionally we are glad to think, a false one in its place. The true issue does not relate to the mode or manner of baptizing, but to the very act of baptizing itself.

Many devout persons regard the acts of sprinkling,

pouring, and immersing, as simply so many modes of baptizing; hence they speak of baptism by sprinkling, baptism by pouring, and baptism by immersion, deeming all alike to be true and scriptural baptisms. This conception of the matter, we are compelled to regard as a fundamental error. Sprinkling, pouring, and immersing, are not different modes of performing the same act, but different acts, each of which is clearly distinct from both the others; hence it appears to us that if any one of them is that baptism which the Lord commanded, the other two are necessarily excluded.

We do not regard immersion as a mode of baptism, but as the very act of baptism itself; therefore we never speak of baptizing by immersion, but simply of baptizing or immersing, the two words being regarded as exact equivalents so far as this ordinance is concerned. To speak of baptizing by immersion is to us just the same as to speak of baptizing by baptism, or of immersing by immersion. On the other hand, with the lights before us, we cannot regard the acts of sprinkling and pouring as baptism at all. To speak therefore of baptizing either by sprinkling or pouring, we regard as unscriptural, unphilological, and misleading.

It is frankly admitted, however, that there are different modes of baptizing or what is the same thing, different modes of immersing—that is, different ways of performing the very thing commanded by the Savior and observed by the apostles. It is also freely admitted that the mode of doing what the Savior commanded is comparatively of little importance, provided the thing itself is done—done in the right spirit—“done decently and in order.”

This is illustrated by the practice of those who immerse. The candidate is usually led into the water, stands while the formula is pronounced, is then gently laid under the water and quickly raised up, and then led

out of the water. This is one mode of immersion. The candidate, however, instead of standing frequently kneels, and in this posture is buried in the water and then raised up again. This is another mode of immersion. In either the standing or the kneeling posture, the subject may be put under the water by being inclined backward or forward or sideward, and all these would be simply different modes of performing the same act of immersion. But can not every one see that a failure to put the subject under the water would be a failure to immerse?

The writer of this was once called in to baptize a man in the last stage of consumption. As the man could not stand alone, much less walk, he was placed upon a litter, and carried by four men to a little stream near by. Then being raised to a sitting posture, the litter was gently lowered into the water, and he was then immersed. This was a mode of immersion differing somewhat from all the modes previously described, yet it was a real immersion nevertheless. Another man in a like state of sickness was taken out of bed, seated in a large bathing tub in the same room, and then buried with his Lord and Savior in baptism.

Now if immersion is baptism, and baptism is immersion, as we shall endeavor to show, all these described cases are simply so many modes of baptizing; but in each and all, the same final act is done; and it is in this act that we find the baptism, and not in something that was merely preparatory to it. It is not the standing, the kneeling, or the sitting posture, that constitutes the baptism, nor the backward, forward, or sideward movement, but the complete immersion or burial of the subject in the water by authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to which immersion these other things were simply preparatory.

Again, it is admitted that it is possible to baptize, that is immerse a man by pouring. If a man should be placed

in a large vessel in any posture, and water poured upon him until he was completely covered, he would be literally immersed; but then it would be the covering with water, or the envelopment in water, that would constitute the immersion, and not the pouring. Would not this, however, be a tedious, clumsy, awkward, and unimpressive mode of doing that which the Lord commanded, and which can be done so much more easily and becomingly, and in a way that will so beautifully and strikingly set forth our death to sin and rising again to walk in newness of life?

Now the question is simply this. When the Savior instituted baptism, did He command the apostles to immerse the subjects in water, or to pour water on them, or to sprinkle water on them? And when the apostles baptized men and women, did they immerse them in water, or did they sprinkle or pour water on them? This is the precise point at issue, as we understand it; and from this standpoint alone we propose to discuss the question.

FIRST ARGUMENT.

The preceding statement of the question brings us to our first argument which is based on the literal meaning and usage of the English words, sprinkle, pour, and immerse. The argument is that the word, immerse, in its literal meaning and usage corresponds in all respects with the literal meaning and usage of the word, baptize, in the New Testament, and that the words, sprinkle and pour, do not so correspond. If this be true, then to substitute the word immerse, for the word, baptize, will in every case express what was done with the person baptized; but to substitute either of the words, sprinkle or pour, for the word, baptize, will not express what was done with the person baptized, but what was done with the water? To make this clear, we will present the literal meaning and gram-

matical construction of the three words in dispute, and then substitute each in turn for the word, baptize. This will show clearly which of these words is the equivalent of the much controverted word, baptize.

Sprinkle, pour, and immerse, are all transitive verbs, although the first and second, are sometimes used intransitively, the action denoted by each terminating on an object and expressing clearly what is done to or with that object. While sprinkle and pour denote different actions, they may have the same direct object; and they always have as their direct object things that are similar in their nature. That which is capable of being sprinkled is capable of being poured; and that which is capable of being poured is also capable of being sprinkled. But the things that are said to have been baptized in the New Testament—that is men and women—are incapable of being literally sprinkled or poured; and the things that are capable of being literally sprinkled or poured, are never said to have been baptized. But in this respect there is an exact correspondence between the words, baptize and immerse, as the persons that were baptized were certainly capable of being immersed.

What then is the action denoted by each of these terms, and what things may each have as its direct object? In other words, what is it to sprinkle, what is it to pour, and what is it to immerse? Also, what things may be sprinkled, what things may be poured, and what things may be immersed?

To sprinkle, as a transitive verb, means, "to scatter or disperse in small drops or particles, as water, seed, and the like."

To pour, as a transitive verb, means "to cause to flow, as a liquid, in a stream, either out of a vessel or into it."

Both sprinkle and pour have as their direct object,

either a liquid of some kind, or something so similar to a liquid that it can be separated into drops or particles which can be scattered, or something that can be made to flow as a stream, as dust, ashes, sand, small seeds, and all fluids. That which cannot be separated into particles, can not be sprinkled, and that which cannot be made to flow as a stream, cannot be poured, in the literal sense of these terms.

To immerse, which is always a transitive verb, means "to plunge into anything that surrounds or covers, especially into a fluid, to dip, to sink, to bury, to immerge." It always has as its direct object something that is solid, or regarded as a solid, as a stone, a ship, a man.

To dip, which may be used interchangeably with immerse, means "to plunge or immerse, especially to put for a moment into any liquid, to insert in a fluid and withdraw again." This is the exact sense in which immerse is used as the equivalent of baptize.

Now with the meaning and grammatical construction of these terms in view, let us make the application. The act of sprinkling terminates on the substance sprinkled, the act of pouring on the substance poured, and the act of immersing or dipping on the body immersed or dipped. How is it with the act of baptizing? Just as it is with the act of immersing or dipping. The act of baptizing terminates on the person or thing baptized.

In every occurrence of the verb, baptize, so far as this question is concerned, its direct object is a person, or persons. John the Baptist did not baptize water on persons; but on the contrary he baptized persons in water, or with water, if you prefer this as a rendering of the preposition in this place. He did not baptize the river of Jordan on men, but he baptized men in the river of Jordan. (Mark 1:5.) The commission enjoined the baptism of persons; and the practice of the apostles must have been

in exact accordance with the commission. Now as persons are incapable of being sprinkled or poured in the literal sense of these terms—that of being scattered as drops, or made to flow as a stream—it follows conclusively that neither sprinkling nor pouring is baptism. On the other hand, if either sprinkling or pouring is baptism, it is the water that is baptized, and not the person; for certainly it is the water that is sprinkled or poured.

I am fully aware of the fact that in abbreviated or elliptical forms of expression, the direct object of the verb, sprinkle, is often omitted, the indirect object taking its place. In all such cases, it is used in the sense of *besprinkle*, which means to *sprinkle on*. Of this secondary usage of the term, we have several examples in the epistle to the Hebrews, the principal ones of which are here cited.

“The blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled,” etc. “He took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people,” etc. “Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood.” (Heb. 9: 13, 19, 21.)

Now these and all similar examples constitute no exception to the facts and principles which have been stated with reference to the literal meaning and usage of this word. They are simply abbreviated or elliptical expressions, from which the direct object of the verb has been dropped, because it can be easily supplied. The Hebrews to whom Paul was writing were fully acquainted with these sacrificial offerings to which he alluded, and they knew precisely what was done. By turning to the passages in Exodus and Leviticus to which the apostle refers, we find a confirmation of all that has been said concern-

ing the scriptural usage and grammatical construction of these terms.

“And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.’” (Ex. 24:8.)

“And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times.” Lev. 16:4.

“And for an unclean person they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean the third day, and on the seventh day,” etc. (Num. 19:17-29)

From these passages we learn that a clean person sprinkled the ashes and water on the unclean; and that Moses sprinkled the blood and water on the book, the people, the tabernacle, and the vessels. The ashes, the blood, and the water—things capable of being scattered in particles or drops—are in every case the direct object of the verb.

In the description of the means by which the leper was cleansed, we find a passage that presents most clearly the distinction between the terms under consideration, not only in English, but also in Hebrew and Greek. “And the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and *pour* it into the palm of his own left hand: and the priest shall *dip* his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall *sprinkle* of the oil with his finger seven times before Jehovah.” Lev. 14:15, 16.

The oil was poured into the palm, one act; the finger was dipped in the oil, another act; the oil adhering to the finger was then sprinkled before Jehovah, a third act differing from both the preceding acts. The oil when poured was made to flow as a stream into the palm; the finger when dipped was baptized or immersed in the oil; and the oil when sprinkled was scattered in drops before Jehovah. The oil was the direct object of the pouring; the finger was the direct object of the dipping; and the oil on the finger was the direct object of the sprinkling. Can anything be plainer than this? And this is the usage of these terms in their primary and literal import throughout the Bible.

With all these facts and principles before us, let us turn to the New Testament usage of the verb, baptize, and endeavor to ascertain which of the terms in controversy corresponds with this usage. In speaking of John's baptism, Mark says, "And there went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem, and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

They, the people of Judea and Jerusalem who came to him, were baptized by him. Now whatever act was denoted by the verb, baptized, that act was performed directly on the people. Let us therefore substitute sprinkle, pour, and immerse, in turn for baptize, by doing which we may ascertain which of these terms expresses the same act as baptize. "And they were all sprinkled of him in the river Jordan."

"And they were all poured of him in the river Jordan."

Neither of these makes good sense. Both were literally impossible; for John could neither have scattered them as drops, nor poured them as a stream, in the river Jordan. As this was a literal baptism, these terms, if substituted for baptize, must be taken in their literal import.

Let us now try immerse.

“And they were all immersed of him in the river Jordan.”

This corresponds precisely with baptize, each verb taking people as its direct object, and in its primary and literal import.

For the next example, we take the commission, quoting as in all other cases from the revised version. “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” etc. In this law of induction into His kingdom, the Savior has made *disciples* the direct object of the act of baptizing; therefore whatever word is substituted for baptizing must also take disciples as its direct object.

“Sprinkling them into the name,” etc.—that is, scattering them as drops into the name, etc. “Pouring them into the name”—that is, causing them to flow as a stream into the name. Comment on these substitutions is unnecessary. They show conclusively that these words in their literal import can not take the place of the word, baptize. “Immersing them into the name.” How apposite, expressing clearly and precisely what was to be done with those who were made disciples.

One more example: “And they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.” Philip baptized the eunuch, and whatever action was performed, that action terminated on the eunuch, and not on the water. Was it the act of sprinkling, of pouring, or of immersing? Let us try each. “And he sprinkled him,” that is, scattered him in particles or drops. This could not have been, for we find the eunuch all together after he was baptized. He came up out of the water and went on his way rejoicing. “And he poured him,” that is, caused him to flow as a stream. This is utterly absurd. “And he immersed him,” that is, put him under the water and

raised him out of it. This makes good sense; and in literal meaning and grammatical construction corresponds precisely with the term, baptized. This is evidently what they went down into the water for—that the eunuch might be buried in it and raised out of it.

We might apply the same test to every passage in which the word, baptize, in any of its forms is used, and the result would be the same in every case. We would find sprinkle and pour inadequate to fill the place of baptize; but immerse would exactly fill it in every instance. We deem these three examples, however, sufficient.

We are well aware of the fact that in the common version the preposition, *with*, is frequently used in connection with the verb, baptize, as, "I indeed baptize you with water; but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." These instances, however, do not affect the position here taken, as in all these cases persons are the direct object of the verb, and not water; and it is just as impossible to sprinkle a man literally—that is, scatter him in drops—with water, as in water. To sprinkle a man with water in the only sense possible, is to sprinkle water on him, that is, to besprinkle him; but this is a secondary usage of the term which is found only in abbreviated or elliptical expressions, and does not correspond with the usage of the word, baptize. It is the water that is literally sprinkled, and not the man; but it is the man that is literally baptized, and not the water. To talk of pouring a man either with water or in water, is to talk without any regard to the meaning of words. The bearing of the prepositions that are used in connection with the verb, baptize, on the question in dispute, will be considered in its proper place; hence we will not enter on this part of the discussion here.

The sum of our first argument is this:— From the literal import of the terms, sprinkle and pour, and from the

direct object of each in its scriptural usage, in contrast with the direct object and scriptural usage of the term, baptize, we are forced to the conclusion that to sprinkle or pour water on persons is *not* to baptize them. On the other hand, from the literal import of the term, immerse, and from its direct object when compared with the literal import and direct object of the term, baptize, in its scriptural usage, we are forced to the conclusion that to immerse persons in water is to baptize them, and not to immerse them is not to baptize them.

SECOND ARGUMENT.

The command to baptize is a command to immerse.

In the original Greek of the New Testament there are two words that are used in setting before us that institution on which Jesus inscribed the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. These words are the verb, *baptizo*, and the noun, *baptisma*. *Bapto* and *baptismos* are also used, but not with reference to the ordinance of baptism. In the common English version, *baptizo* is represented by its anglicized form, *baptize*, and *baptisma* likewise by its anglicized form, *baptism*. Thus these words, with only a slight change of orthography, have been transferred rather than translated.

When the Savior gave to the apostles their commission in which He instituted baptism for all nations and all coming time, He used a participial form of the verb—*baptizantes*—baptizing them. In the work laid on the apostles, that of making disciples and baptizing them, He promised to be with them always, even to the end of the Gospel age. This settles the question as to the perpetuity of baptism beyond all reasonable doubt; for the only baptism that the apostles with all their extraordinary endowments could administer, was baptism in water—the baptism which was here ordained. Only the glorified Re-

deemer Himself could bestow the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The word, *baptizontes*, used by the Holy Spirit in reporting through Matthew the great commission, must have had a definite meaning. This meaning the apostles must have clearly and fully understood; for they themselves had been baptized, and had also baptized others. Whatever act then this word denoted at that time, that act the apostles performed when they baptized, and that act alone constituted baptism. Hence, when stripped of all irrelevant matter, the question concerning the action of baptism is simply a question as to the meaning of a word. Now if we can learn what this word means as used by the Holy Spirit, we know what baptism is; and the question is settled, if the meaning of words and the authority of Jesus can settle anything. But if we cannot ascertain clearly and beyond all reasonable doubt what this word means, then we can never learn what baptism is, and this question must remain unsettled to the end of time.

We can not for a moment entertain the thought that the Savior used a word of doubtful import in establishing an institution of so much significance; nor can we think that the Holy Spirit would thus have trifled with the understanding and conscience of men in reporting what the Savior said and the apostles did. Nothing could detract more from the character of Jesus, or to a greater extent disparage the claim of the apostles to inspiration, than such a hypothesis as this, if it could be sustained. If this could be established, well might the unbelieving hosts rejoice; for their triumph would soon be at hand. But this position can never be established, because it is absolutely false.

The Savior used words to express His will, and to lead men into the knowledge of the truth. He opened the minds of the apostles that they might understand the

Scriptures concerning Himself and His own teaching, and thus they were enabled to teach others. Holy men both of the Old and the New Testament, speaking and writing as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, used words to reveal the counsel of God with reference to the human family. It follows from these facts that throughout the Bible the words of men are used in their legitimate import. If this is not true, then the Bible is the most deceptive of all books, and unworthy of being called a revelation from God.

All words have a meaning. That which has no meaning is not, and can not be, a word in the true sense of the term. To call that a word which has no meaning is a palpable contradiction in terms; for words are the names of things, the signs of ideas, the symbols of thought. Not only is it true that all words have a meaning; it is also true that every word has one, and but one literal and primary meaning, from which all other meanings and usages are derived. In the process of time, a word may lose one meaning and acquire another; but a word never has two meanings in one and the same place. As it is impossible for two bodies to occupy the same space at the same time, so it is impossible for two meanings to occupy the same word at the same time. A word may have one meaning in one place, and another meaning in another place; but in each place the meaning is one.

Again, a word may be used at one time in a literal sense, and at another time in a figurative sense; but the meaning of a word can not be both literal and figurative at the same time. Both the literal and figurative meaning of a word, however, may be placed in contrast in the same sentence. For instance, on a certain occasion the Savior said, "Let *the dead* bury *their dead*." The context shows clearly that the word, dead, in the first place is used in a figurative sense, because it is applied to living persons;

and that, in the second place, it is used in a literal sense, because it refers to the burial of the body in the grave.

Now if *baptizo* had two, or a dozen, or a hundred meanings in as many different places, it could have but one of these meanings in any one place. It can therefore have but one meaning in the commission; and whatever meaning it has in the commission, it must have the same meaning in every passage which represents the apostles and others as doing what the Savior commanded to be done. What then does this word mean? When this question is correctly answered, the action of baptism is authoritatively settled.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF THE LEXICONS.

In our effort to ascertain the meaning of the word used by the Savior, our first appeal is to the lexicons. It is the duty of the lexicographer to define words in accordance with their well-established usage; hence, next to that usage itself which gives law to language, lexicons are the highest authority. We make our citations mainly from the Campbell and Rice debate, the Braden and Hughey debate, and Dr. Brent's "Gospel Plan of Salvation." We shall aim to give only a fair sample of the evidence that might be adduced in support of each argument; for, as all know, an exhaustive discussion on the subject would fill a large volume.

1. Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon, Seventh edition, Revised and Augmented:—"Baptizo, * * * to dip in or under water; of ships to sink or disable them; to be drenched; metaph. soaked in wine, over head and ears in debt, being drowned with questions or getting into deep water. 2. To draw wine by dipping the cup into the bowl. 3. To baptize: Mid. to dip one's self, to get one's self baptized.

2. Thayer's Greek-Lexicon of the New Testament:—

“Baptizo; I. 1. To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge. 2. To cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water; in the mid. and the 1 aor. pass. to wash one’s self, bathe. 3. Metaph. To overwhelm, to be overwhelmed with calamities. II. In the New Testament it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards, by Christ’s command received by Christians and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion. (See Baptism, 3), viz: an immersion in water,” etc.

These two definitions are cited from J. B. Briney’s “Form of Baptism.”

3. Donnegan:—To immerse repeatedly into a liquid, to submerge, to soak thoroughly, to saturate, hence to drench with wine. Metaphorically, to confound totally; to dip in a vessel, to draw. Passive, to be immersed.”

4. Pickering:—To dip, immerse, submerge, plunge, sink, overwhelm, to steep, to soak, to wet, to wash one’s self, or bathe. *Baptismos*—immersion, dipping, plunging; metaphorically, misery with which one is overwhelmed.

5. Groves:—“To dip, immerse, immerge, plunge, to wash, cleanse, purify.”

6. Robinson:—“To immerse, to sink; for example, spoken of ships, galleys, etc. In the New Testament, to wash, to cleanse by washing; to wash one’s self, to bathe, perform ablution,” etc. On this Dr. Brents remarks: “Mr. Robinson was a Presbyterian, and gives the primary meaning of *baptizo* to immerse, and then gives the meanings to wash, cleanse, etc., from the New Testament, from such passages as do not speak of baptism, and where the word is translated, as in Mark 7:4; Luke 11:38.”

8. Sophocles:—“To dip, to immerse; to sink, to be drowned as the effect of sinking. Tropically, to afflict, soaked in liquor: to be drunk, intoxicated.”

9. Minhert:—"To baptize; properly, indeed, it signifies to immerse, to plunge, to dip in the water. But because it is common to plunge or dip a thing to wash it, hence it signifies to wash, to wash away. Baptisma—immersion, dipping into, washing, washing away; properly, and according to its etymology, it denotes that washing that is done by immersion."

10. Pasor:—"To dip, immerse, to dye, because it is done by immersing. It differs from *dunai*, which means to sink to the bottom, and to be thoroughly submerged. Metaphorically, in Matthew, afflictions are compared to a flood of waters, in which they seem to be immersed who are overwhelmed with the miseries and misfortunes of life, yet only so overwhelmed as to emerge again."

11. Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon of the New Testament:—"To dip, immerse, to cleanse or purify by washing; to administer the rite of baptism, to baptize; metaphorically, with various reference to the ideas associated with Christian baptism as an act of dedication, e. g. marked designation, devotion, trial, etc.; middle voice, to procure baptism for one's self, to undergo baptism. Baptisma—immersion, baptism, ordinance of baptism. Metaphorically, baptism in trial of suffering."

12. Bretschneider:—"Properly, often to dip, often to wash, to cleanse; in the middle voice, I wash or cleanse myself. An entire immersion belongs to the nature of baptism. This is the meaning of the word, for in baptism is contained the idea of a complete immersion under the water; at least so is *baptisma* in the New Testament. In the New Testament, *baptizo* is only used concerning the sacred and solemn submersion which the Jews used. Baptisma—immersion, submersion. In the New Testament, it is used only concerning the sacred submersion which the Fathers call Christian baptism."

13. Parkhurst:—"To immerse in or wash with water

in token of purification. Figuratively to be immersed or plunged into a flood or sea, as it were of grievous afflictions and sufferings.”

It seems to us that thirteen such witnesses as these, all testifying so plainly and pointedly to the same thing, ought to settle the matter beyond all dispute, especially when there is no conflicting testimony of like high standing and authority. There are two more witnesses, however, whose testimony we deem it necessary to cite, inasmuch as there has been much controversy as to what they do testify. These are Stokius and Schleusner. Their testimony is quoted from the “Gospel Plan of Salvation” by Dr. Brents.

14. “Stokius defines in Latin, and is supposed to give some comfort to those who practice affusion and aspersion. The plan of his work is somewhat different from other lexicographers, as indicated in the title page which we give as follows: ‘Clavis of Christian Stokius, Professor in Public Academy’ of Jena; Opening the way to the sacred tongue of the New Testament, exhibiting in convenient order, first, the general and then the special meaning of words; assisting especially the studies (or efforts) as well of tyros as of the cultivators of homiletics and exegesis; and then supplying the place of concordances with an index of words. Fourth edition enlarged and improved.’ ”

“By this it will be seen that he gives, first, the general and then the specific meanings. Hence he defines *baptidzo* to wash, to baptize, and then proceeds to define the word specifically as follows: ‘Generally, and by force of the word, it obtains the notion of a dipping and an immersion. Second: Specifically and properly it is to immerse or dip into the water. Figuratively, by metalepsis, it is to wash, to cleanse, because a thing is accustomed to be dipped or immersed in water that it may be washed or cleansed; although washing or cleansing can and is accus-

tomed to be done by sprinkling water.' [Thus we see how it is that *baptidzo* comes to mean wash, because things are accustomed to be dipped that they may be washed.]”

“ ‘Baptisma—baptism: Generally, and by force of its origin, it denotes immersion or dipping. 2. Specifically, properly it denotes the immersion or dipping of a thing into the water that it may be cleansed or washed; hence it is transferred to designating the first sacrament of the New Testament, which they call [the sacrament] of initiation—namely baptism, in which those to be baptized were formerly immersed into water; though at this day the water is only sprinkled upon them, that they may be cleansed from the pollution of sin, obtain the remission of it, and be received into the covenant of grace as heirs of eternal life. 3. By metaphor, it signifies the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and other believers, not only on account of the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, just as formerly water was poured upon those baptized, or they were immersed deep into the water, but also on account of the efficacy and virtue of the Holy Spirit, which, like living water, refreshes the heart, cleanses from filth, and purifies ’

“Thus we have given a perfectly literal translation of the Latin of Stokius, made directly from the original work, that the reader may have the full benefit of it. He shows clearly that *baptidzo* primarily means to dip or immerse, and that it means to wash only because things are accustomed to be dipped that they may be washed. Nor is this all; he most clearly shows that the custom of the present day is a departure from the original practice. As to when, how, and by whom this departure from primitive practice was introduced we will see at the proper time.”

15. “Schleusner:—‘*Baptidzo*—properly, I immerse, and I dip (intingo), I sink into water. From *bapto*, and

corresponds to Hebrew *tabal*, 2d Kings, v:14, in the Alexandrian version; to *tabang* in the writings of Symmachus, Psalmody 68:5, in anonymous Psalmody, 9:6. But it is never used in this signification in the New Testament, [that is, in the sense in which *tabang* is used in the passages referred to.—M], but is frequently thus used in Greek writers, * * * Now, because a thing is accustomed to be immersed, or dipped in water, that it may be washed, hence it marks (or denotes) I cleanse, I wash, I purge with water; thus it is used in Mark vii:4. * * * Jesus did not wash Himself before dinner. Luke xi:38. Metaphorically, as in Latin, I wet or soak, I give and apply largely and copiously, I pour forth abundantly; e. g. Matt. iii:11. He will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire.”

“*Baptisma*—baptism: a verbal noun from the passive participle of *bebaptisma*, of the verb *baptidzo*, (1) properly immersion, dipping into water, a washing. Hence, it is transferred to the sacred rite which, par excellence, is called baptism; in which formerly those to be baptized were plunged into water that they might be bound to the true divine religion. Thus it is used concerning the baptism which John the Baptist administered by divine command (Matt. iii:7, Luke vii:29), which, par excellence, is called the baptism of repentance, because he bound men to a willing obedience and an emendation of their spirits.

Here, truly, it should be observed that the expression, ‘the baptism of John,’ has sometimes a wider signification, and by synecdoche it signifies the whole function, institution and doctrine of John the Baptist. * * * By metaphor, the heaviest afflictions and calamities were endured on account of religion, in which those who sustained them were as if they were submerged, which formerly were not improperly called a baptism in blood. *Baptismos*—a washing, cleansing, purification.”

“As Schleusner’s Lexicon, like that of Stokius, is in

possession of but very few, and is not published in America, making it almost impossible to purchase it without an order to London, we have given a literal translation made directly from the Latin of his work. And as his language is most cruelly perverted, and those who have not his lexicon are imposed upon by those who are willing to support a favorite dogma at the expense of truth, we have given all he has said which we regard as at all calculated to throw any light on the subject. His definition of *baptidzo* is quoted thus. 'Properly, to immerse or dip, to plunge into water * * * but in this sense it never occurs in the New Testament.' See Louisville Debate, page 487. It was also thus quoted in a debate with us at Flat Creek. By leaving out the words to which the author refers when he says 'in this sense it never occurs in the New Testament,' he is made to say that *baptidzo* never occurs in the sense of immerse, dip, or plunge into water in the New Testament. By reference to his definition it will be seen that he says in the sense of *tabang*, it is never used in the New Testament. *Tabang* means to sink, to be sunk, immersed, as in mire or a pit, and the examples referred to are cases where *baptidzo* is used in this sense, without any reference to emersion from that into which the immersion occurred. The author's definition of the noun *baptisma* (which was left out in the debate referred to), shows that because it does mean immerse, dipping, etc, it is transferred to the sacred rite which, par excellence, is called baptism, in which those formerly to be baptized were plunged into water. Thus Schleusner was made to say just the opposite to what he did say. Certainly the whole weight of his authority is in favor of immersion as baptism.'" Gospel Plan of Salvation, pages 274-276.

In thus presenting so clearly their full testimony on this subject, Dr. Brents has not only taken Stokius and

Schleusner out of the hands of affusionists, but has also turned their testimony with crushing force against the practice of affusion or aspersion. This must suffice for the lexicons.

II. THE TESTIMONY OF LEARNED AND EMINENT MEN.

These include commentators, theologians, writers for encyclopedias, and authors of critical works on various theological questions,—men distinguished for critical scholarship, and whose honest testimony in many cases is directly contrary to their own practice.

1. Luther:—"The term baptism is a Greek word; it may be rendered into Latin by *mersio*—when we immerse anything in water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though this custom be quite abolished among the generality (for neither do they entirely dip children, but only sprinkle them with a little water), nevertheless they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately to be drawn out again, for the etymology of the word seems to require it."

2. Calvin:—"The word baptize signifies to immerse, and the rite of immersion was practiced by the ancient church."

3. Witsius:—"It can not be denied that the ancient signification of *baptein* and *baptizein* is to plunge, to dip."

4. Zanchius:—"The proper signification of baptize is to immerse, plunge under, overwhelm with water."

5. Prof. Moses Stuart:—"Bapto and baptizo mean to dip, plunge, or immerse in anything liquid. All lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this."

6. Dr. Chalmers:—"The original meaning of the word baptism is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifference whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of administration in the apos-

tles' days was by an actual submersion of the whole body under the water."

7. Beza:—"Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word it is certain immersion is signified. To be baptized in water signifies no other than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism."

8. Altingius:—"Baptism is immersion when the whole body is immersed, but the term baptism is never used concerning aspersion "

9. Bishop Bossuet:—"To baptize signifies to plunge, as is granted by all the world."

10. Encyclopedia Americana:—"Baptism, that is dipping, immersion, from the Greek word *baptizo*."

11. Venema;—The word *baptizein*, to baptize, is nowhere used in the Scriptures for sprinkling."

12. Brande's Encyclopedia:—"Bapto—I dip. Baptism was originally administered by immersion. At present sprinkling is generally substituted."

13. Stourdza, a native Greek:—"The verb baptizo has only one acceptation. It literally and perpetually signifies to plunge. Baptism and immersion, therefore, are identical; and to say baptism by aspersion is as if one should say immersion by aspersion, or utter any other contradiction of the same nature."

14. Gurtlerus:—"To baptize among the Greeks, is undoubtedly to immerse, to dip; and baptism is immersion, dipping. The thing commanded by our Lord is baptism, immersion in water."

15. Dr. Charles Anthon:—"The primary meaning of the word is to dip or immerse; and its secondary meanings, if it ever had any, all refer in some way or other to the same leading idea. Sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question."

We might adduce many more witnesses on this point equally as positive and explicit as the preceding; but we

have not the space, and we deem it unnecessary. If these eminent men, whose testimony has been cited, understood the Greek language, it is conclusively proved that the command to baptize is a command to immerse.

III. THE USAGE OF THE WORD IN GREEK LITERATURE.

All extant Greek literature, including works written before, during and after the New Testament age, has been thoroughly examined, and every occurrence of the word, baptizo, in any of its forms has been carefully noted, in order that its meaning might be clearly ascertained. This investigation has shown beyond the power of successful contradiction that the lexicons are all right in giving dip, immerse, or plunge, as the primary and literal meaning of the word. Dr. Conant in his work on "Baptizein" has enumerated two hundred and thirty-six examples of its use; and these, he says, "Exhaust the use of this word in Greek literature." A few of these we copy from Dr. Conant's translation, the original of each example being given by him. For the sake of brevity we give of each example only the sentence or clause containing the word in question.

1. Polybius:—"They made continuous assaults, and submerged (ebaptizon) many of the vessels."

2. Aristotle:—"Places—which, when it is ebb-tide, are not immersed (baptizesthai), but when it is flood-tide are overflowed."

3. Polybius:—"So that when the oaken part is immersed (baptizomenon) by the weight, the rest is buoyed up, and is easily recovered."

4. Polybius:—"They passed through with difficulty, the foot-soldiers immersed (baptizomenoi) as far as to the breasts."

5. Diodorus the Sicilian:—"The river rushing down with increased violence, submerged (ebaptize) many, and

destroyed them attempting to swim through with their armor."

6. Strabo:—"They marched the whole day in water, immersed (baptizomenoi) as far as to the waist."

7. Josephus:—"Continually pressing down and immersing (baptizantes) him while swimming, as if in sport, they did not desist until they had entirely suffocated him."

9. Plutarch:—"A bladder, thou mayest be immersed (baptizee), but it is not possible for thee to sink."

9. Dion Cassius:—"And others leaping into the sea, were drowned, or struck by the enemy were submerged (ebaptizonto).

10. Porphyry concerning the Styx:—"The depth is as far as to the knees; and when the accused comes to it, if he is guiltless he goes through without fear, having the water as far as to the knees; but if guilty, after proceeding a little way, he is immersed (baptizetai) unto the head."

11. Gregory:—"He himself would remain on high in safety, and stretching out a hand to others save them, as if drawing up persons submerged (baptizomenous).

12. Chrysostom:—"No fire applied, nor steel plunged in (baptizomenon), nor flowing blood."

13. Josephus:—"Those therefore who were defiled by the dead body, casting a little of the ashes into a fountain and dipping (baptizantes) a hyssop-branch, they sprinkled (errainon) on the third and seventh of the (thirty) days."

We have not space for any more examples. Indeed we deem these sufficient; for all the others, without a single exception, are of like character. They all present clearly that usage of the word, from which the lexicographers deduced their definition of the term. They all show that to the extent to which any person or thing was baptized, just to that extent was he or it immersed. If the baptism was partial, the immersion was partial; but if the

baptism was total, the immersion also was total. Not an example has yet been found in all Greek literature, in which this word can be correctly translated by sprinkle or pour; but in every occurrence of the word, the meaning may be correctly and exactly represented by dip, plunge, immerse, or some other word of similar import, meaning to cover completely.

We now close this argument. If it is *granted by all the world*, as Bishop Bossuet says, that *to baptize signifies to plunge*, if the word is *always construed suitably to this meaning of immersion*, as Dr. George Campbell says; if *all critics and lexicographers of any note are agreed in this*, that baptizo means *to dip, plunge, or immerse into anything liquid*, as Prof. Moses Stuart says; if it is a *fixed point universally admitted* that the word signifies to dip, as the Edinburgh Reviewers say; if *the thing commanded to be done is immersion in water*, as Gurtlerus says; if *sprinkling, etc., are entirely out of the question*, as Prof. Anthon says; if *baptism and immersion are identical*, as Stourdza, a native Greek, says; then it is irrefutably proved that THE COMMAND TO BAPTIZE IS A COMMAND TO IMMERSE.

THIRD ARGUMENT.

New Testament Facts.

We base our third argument on all the facts found in the New Testament that have any bearing on the question. These include (1) the places where baptism was administered, (2) the prepositions used in connection with the term, (3) the allusions to baptism in the Epistles, (4) the figurative use of the term and the figurative representations of the ordinance itself, and (5) the literal usage of the term where there is no reference to the ordinance. We claim that all these are in accordance with the literal and primary meaning of baptize, which is, as we have already seen, to *dip or immerse*, in which accord-

ing to Prof. Moses Stuart, of Andover, "all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed."

I. THE PLACES WHERE BAPTISM WAS ADMINISTERED.

John baptized "in the river Jordan," to which the people came in large crowds from Jerusalem, from all Judea, and from the regions lying along the Jordan. In the common version, we have in Matt. 3:6, "in Jordan," as in Mark 2:5. It was "in the Jordan" that Jesus Himself was baptized. Mark 1:9.

Whence the necessity of resorting to the Jordan in order to be baptized? It was doubtless because it was the most convenient place for the immersion of so many people. It was certainly not necessary for the people to go to the Jordan to have a little water sprinkled or poured on them. It has been conjectured that John arranged the people along the banks of the Jordan, and then dipping a hyssop branch into the stream besprinkled them; but this is simply trivial. To the performance of such an act as this, the Jordan was by no means necessary. A small vessel would have been amply sufficient; and a mountain top would have been as convenient a place as the valley of the Jordan.

What a wonderful capacity some minds have to imagine things that are neither expressed nor implied in the scriptural record, while at the same time they overlook or reject matters of fact that are plainly stated. Matthew and Mark both declare plainly and positively that John baptized the people *in the river Jordan*; but they do not say that he sprinkled or poured water on them at the Jordan. Now when we consider that baptize in Greek means to dip, or immerse, as all scholars testify, we can see the propriety of those vast assemblies at the river Jordan, that they—the people—might be immersed "in the river Jordan." It is true that they might have been immersed in the

cities and towns in which they lived, as thousands were on and after the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem and at many other places. John's ministry, however, was of very short duration; and God, instead of sending him around to all the cities, towns, and villages of Palestine, sent the people out to him where the work could be done in the shortest space of time; and for the doing of this work, the Jordan afforded the amplest facilities.

After laboring for a time on the lower Jordan, John moved higher up the river, but still continued the work of baptizing. This we learn from John 1:28,—“These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.” The preposition *beyond*, which represents *peran* in the original, has been stretched to a great distance, at least far enough to take John entirely away from the Jordan to some dry spot where only a small quantity of water could be had to be sprinkled or poured on the people. But *peran* in Greek simply means *across* or *on the other side*; and John could certainly immerse people as easily on the one side of the river as on the other. Bethabara means *house of passage*, from which it follows that this place was one of the fords or crossing places of the Jordan, at which it was convenient for the people to assemble, and for John to carry on his work.

We are aware of the fact that some of the manuscripts have *Bethany* instead of *Bethabara*, and that this reading is followed in the Revised Testament; but this does not at all affect the argument. If the name of the place at which John baptized was Bethany, it was a Bethany beyond or on the other side of Jordan, and not the Bethany near Jerusalem.

Admitting that Bethabara or Bethany may have been a large town or city, and that *hopou* which is rendered *where* should be rendered *in which place*, thus putting the baptisms within the town or city limits, not the least

difficulty will be presented in the way of immersion, as there were ample facilities in all Jewish towns of that day for bathing the whole person, and therefore for immersion. The simple statement that baptism was administered at any place, even if on a mountain top, can not give to a word a meaning which it never had in all the literature of the language to which it belongs. If the narrative is a truthful one, then that which the word means was done, it matters not in what place.

We think, however, that we can prove conclusively that these baptisms beyond the Jordan were actually in the Jordan. Before John was cast into prison, some of his disciples said to him, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond (*peran*) Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth and all men come to him." (John 3: 26.) Now, when was Jesus with John beyond Jordan? Evidently when John bore witness to Him. When did John bear witness to Him? When He was baptized. Where was Jesus baptized? In the Jordan, says Mark. So Jesus was beyond Jordan with John, and yet was baptized by John in the Jordan. The Greek is *into* the Jordan, as the marginal note of the Revision informs us.

Again it is said that Jesus on a certain occasion "went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John was at first baptizing." Here we have *peran*—beyond, *hopou*—where, and also *eis ton topon*—into the place; and this is said to be the place where John baptized. Now Matthew and Mark both say that John first baptized "in the river Jordan"—Revised Version. So "beyond Jordan" simply takes us across the Jordan to the other side, while the baptism brings into the Jordan according to the testimony of the eye-witnesses. The writer of this has often baptized at Cotton Gin Port beyond the Tombigbee, yet the baptisms were all performed in the river.

After the baptism of Jesus, John is found for a short

time "baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." (John 3:23.) So far as this argument is concerned, we are willing to accept the rendering, "many waters" instead of "much water," as affusionists generally so greatly prefer this rendering which is sustained by a marginal note in the Revised Testament. It has been seriously asserted that John resorted to the many waters of Aenon that the people might have a sufficient supply of water for themselves and their beasts. But this is wholly imaginary, and not only suggests a reason for John's labor at that place which is neither expressed nor implied in the record, but also sets aside the reason that is expressly assigned for the selection of the place. The fact that there were many waters at Aenon is assigned as a reason why John was baptizing there.* That place of many waters was chosen for the purpose of baptizing, and not for cooking and drinking purposes, nor for the purpose of watering animals. John was not keeping a boarding house, nor was he engaged in the stock business; but he was engaged in baptizing people, and for this purpose selected the many waters of Aenon. It does not require many waters, however, to sprinkle a few drops, or lay a moistened finger, on the forehead of the subject, as is now often done.

When Prof. McGarvey was in Palestine in 1878, he visited the locality of the many waters, and from his description the following extract is taken.

"From the juncture of the two streams we continued down the Wady Farah in search of a place answering to Aenon. The 'much water' we found all the way, and although the season was exceptionally dry, pools well suited for baptizing were abundant. We rode into a number of them to try their depth. But we wanted to find in addition to the much water, an open space on the bank of the stream suitable for the assembling of the great multitudes who flocked to John's baptism, and for several miles we found

no such place.” After giving a graphic description of the route, he adds,—“Finally, after a fatiguing ride, during which our dragoman and our escort became discouraged and fell behind, there suddenly opened before us a beautiful valley among the mountains, about one mile wide and three miles long. Bedawin tents were pitched here and there; herds of camels, to the number of three or four hundred, were grazing, or drinking, or moving about; and swarms of brown-skinned boys, both large and small, were bathing at the different places in the stream. Here, then, was the open space required, and a more suitable place for the gathering of a multitude could not be found on the banks of any stream in Palestine. It is identified as Aenon by the only man who has ever made a thorough and scientific exploration of the country, and it is now accepted as such without dispute from any quarter. We cut an oleander cane apeice from the stream, and we took a bath in one of its pools.”

Nothing is said as to the places where the disciples made by Jesus during His personal ministry, were baptized. It is simply stated that “Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea; and there He tarried with them and baptized.” It is also said that the “Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but His disciples).” The land of Judea and of Galilee both afforded ample facilities for the immersion of any number of people, however great. There is no definite information in Acts as to the places where the apostles baptized on and after the day of Pentecost. The three thousand were doubtless baptized in the city of Jerusalem, for which there was an abundance of water in the pools that were open to all the people. Dr. Barclay, Prof. McGarvey, and many others, in describing the water supplies

of the ancient city, have placed this fact beyond reasonable doubt.

The place where the eunuch was baptized has not been definitely located; and it has been denied that there is any water on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza in which a man could be immersed. Even if this is so now, it does not follow by any means that it was so then; for all ought to know that the supply of water was much more abundant in that country then than it is now after eighteen hundred years of desolation. But this is not the case now. Dr. Barclay found several places on that road in which a man could be immersed now; and Prof. McGarvey closed his investigation of the matter with the following statement:—"On the whole, we conclude it is impossible to decide in what exact water the eunuch was baptized, but the present topography of the country shows that there are at least two streams in which it might have been done consistently with all that is said in the Scriptures."

It is contended that Saul of Tarsus was baptized standing up, and hence could not have been immersed. I have witnessed many hundreds of immersions, and with the exception of a very few sick persons who were unable to stand alone, they all stood up in order to be immersed. In the few cases of sprinkling and pouring that I have witnessed, the subjects with one exception did not stand up in order to have water sprinkled or poured on them, but remained in a sitting posture. Had Ananias intended to sprinkle or pour water on Saul, it would have been needless to tell him to stand up; but in order to his immersion it was necessary for him to arise, as the word is correctly rendered in this place. He had to arise, that he might go to some place where he could be baptized. As these considerations set aside the objections against immersion founded on this passage, it is needless to enter

into any criticism concerning the meaning of *anastas*, inasmuch as we can grant the rendering, *stand up*, for which affusionists contend, and then their argument commits suicide.

It has been said that the Philippian jailer was baptized in his own house; and therefore that it is not probable that he was immersed. Now there is not the shadow of a foundation for this in the history of the case; but on the contrary, it is clearly implied that he was not baptized in his house, at least in that part of it in which the discourse was delivered. Even if it was positively stated that he was baptized in his house, it would not render his immersion either impossible or improbable; for many houses in that country at that time had baths in them sufficient and convenient for the bathing or immersion of the whole family.

Now what is said that has any bearing on the place of this baptism? Let us carefully note all the facts. 1. He "brought them out" of the "inner prison," into which they had been thrust, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 2. After answering his question, it is said that "they spake the word of the Lord unto him and to all that were in his house." From this it follows that the jailer brought them out of the inner prison into his own house. 3. After the discourse "he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his immediately." 4. Then it is said that "he brought them up into his house, and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly with all his house, having believed in God."

Now as they were all in his house when the word of the Lord was spoken, and as he brought them up into his house after he was baptized, it follows conclusively that when he took them he must of necessity taken them out of his house to some place where there was water enough

for the washing of their stripes and the baptism of himself and family. Whether this was to his own private bath, in some public pool in the city, or to the river where Paul and Silas first met Lydia and other devout women, we know not; but we do know that he took them out of his house in which the word of the Lord was spoken to him, in order to be baptized, for the record says so; and we also know that this would have been entirely unnecessary, if sprinkling or pouring had been the act of baptism. In this case, a little water brought to them in a cup or pitcher would have sufficed.

II. THE PREPOSITIONS USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE TERM.

These are *apo*—*from*, *en*—*in*, *eis*—*into*, and *ek*—*out of*. In Matt. 3:16, in the common version, we have *apo ton hudatos* rendered “out of the water,” but in the revised version “from the water.” We willingly accept this revised rendering; but this will not help the other side of the question, as the parallel passage, Mark 1:10, has *ek* in the text followed by the revisers, and is accordingly rendered “out of.” Mark makes an additional statement that throws great light on the subject, and strongly confirms our argument. He says that “Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.” In the margin we are told that the Greek is *into* instead of *in*. Thus Mark’s explicit testimony takes Jesus down into the Jordan into which he was baptized, and then brings Him up out of the water: while Matthew’s statement takes Him away from the water as the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. Briefly, *eis* takes Him into the water, *ek* brings Him out of the water, and *apo* takes Him away from the water.

The preposition most frequently used in connection with water and Spirit in reference to baptism is *en*, the

literal and primary meaning of which is *in*. Will those who contend so strenuously for the literal meaning of *apo*, accept the literal meaning of *en* and *eis*? If so, the question is settled in favor of immersion.

In all those passages in which John's baptism is contrasted with the Spirit-baptism which Jesus alone could bestow, the preposition *en* is invariably rendered *with* in the common version. This rendering is not only incorrect, but is also inconsistent with the rendering generally given in other and similar cases of its use. This preposition is used some 2660 times in the New Testament, and is rendered *in*, some 2042 times. This shows that in the judgment of King James' revisers the primary, literal and usual meaning of the word is *in*. Even in the immediate context in which the rendering *with* first occurs, the revisers were compelled to render it *in*. It is said in Matt. 3:6, that those who came to John "were baptized of him (*en*) *in* Jordan." Mark 1:5 says, (*en*) "*in* the river of Jordan." John did not baptize *with* Jordan, nor *with* the river, but *in* Jordan, *in* the river. In Matt. 3:1, it is said that John came "preaching (*en*) *in* the wilderness of Judea." Why not render this *with* the wilderness? *With* would be as correct a rendering of *en* in this verse as it is in the eleventh verse of the same chapter. If *en too Irdancee* means in the Jordan, and *en tee eremoo* means in the wilderness; then *en hudati* means in water, and *en pneumatì hagìoo* means in the Holy Spirit.

This incorrect rendering of the preposition in the passages that relate to baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit, has given rise to more sophistry, and has done more to confuse the minds of the unlearned with reference to the act of baptism than any other one thing. It is argued that as John baptized the people with water, he must of course have applied the water to the subject, and not the subject to the water. In support of this many il-

illustrations are given in which with is used to introduce the instrument with which any thing is done; as, "I shave with a razor;" "I write with a pen," etc. As the razor is applied to the face and the pen to the paper, so, it is argued, the water must be applied to the person. Dr. Brents offsets this so called argument with such examples as the following:—"The tanner tans his leather with ooze," "The dyer dyes his cloth with dye," etc. Now, to tan with ooze, the leather must be put into the ooze; and to dye with dye, the cloth must be put into the dye. So, by parity of reasoning, to baptize with water, the subject must be put into the water. But such examples as these prove nothing on either side of the question because they have no bearing whatever on it. We simply meet a quibble with a quibble to show the utter fallacy of this kind of reasoning.

Shaving is an act performed with an instrument. Baptism is an act performed, not with an instrument but with an element; not with the Jordan, but in the Jordan. It was done in the river of Jordan, not with the river of Jordan. So the Holy Spirit was the element in which the exalted Savior baptized the apostles and others, and not the instrument with which it was done. How derogatory to the Holy Spirit to represent it as an instrument or tool, comparable to a razor or a pen, with which something is done! In all the scriptural representations of baptism, there is no suggestion of any instrument at all. There are just five things that belong to the administration of baptism, and no more. These are, (1) the administrator, (2) the subject, (3) the element, (4) the act itself, and (5) the design. As all except those who reject baptism altogether admit that water is the element, there is not now, and never has been any controversy on this point. All this talk then about the instrumental sense of *en* in this connection is misleading, and entirely foreign to the question,

for there is no instrument in the case.

In the Revised Testament, in all these passages, while *with* is retained in the text, *in* is placed in the margin as an alternative rendering. The American revisers, however, placed *in* in the text and *with* in the margin. This testimony of so many eminent scholars, very few of whom were immersionists, ought to silence forever this unscholarly quibble about *with*.

Eis and *ek* we find in the account of the eunuch's baptism. "And they both went down (*eis*) into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up (*ek*) out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip," etc. (Acts 8:38,39, R. V.) The most desperate efforts have been made to make it appear that *eis* in connection with the water of baptism means simply *at* or *to*; but these efforts all fail most signally when brought to bear on this passage; for they had already come (*epi*) *to* or *upon* "a certain water" when the eunuch said, "See, here is water, what hinders me to be baptized?" They are now at the water, but this is not all that is necessary. They must go "down into the water" that the baptism may be performed; and after "he baptized him," "they came up out of the water." Had sprinkling or pouring been baptism, it would not have been necessary for them to get out of the chariot, and much less to go down into the water.

We now cite examples of the use of *eis* in the New Testament. "Jesus was led up by the Spirit (*eis*) *into* the wilderness. "The devil taketh him up (*eis*) *into* the holy city." The demons "went (*eis*) *into* the swine; and the whole herd rushed down the steep (*eis*) *into* the sea, and perished (*en*) *in* the waters." "And these shall go away (*eis*) *into* eternal punishment; but the righteous (*eis*) *into* eternal life." "And death and Hades were cast (*eis*) *into* the lake of fire." "And if any was not found written in the

book of life, he was cast (*eis*) *into* the lake of fire." "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates (*eis*) *into* the city."

Hundreds of similar examples could be given, but these are sufficient. According to the logic of affusionists, *eis* will take a person *into* any thing but the water. Here the exigency of their cause demands that it should mean *at* or *to*; but then their position is without foundation; for the meaning of the word was fixed long before sprinkling or pouring was substituted for baptism. As *eis* takes the righteous into heaven and the wicked into hell; so it took Jesus into the Jordan, in the waters of which He was baptized. It likewise took Philip and the eunuch into the certain water unto which they had already come. And as *eis* took them into the water, *ek* brought them out of the same.

III. EPISTOLARY ALLUSIONS TO BAPTISM.

1. *Baptism as a Burial*. "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we might also walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection." (Rom. 6:3-5. R. V.)

"Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." (Col. 2:12. R. V.)

In these two passages, those who had been baptized are said to have been buried and raised up; the burial corresponding to their immersion in the waters of baptism and the rising to their emersion from the same. That there

is an allusion in both these passages to the apostolic practice of immersion has been freely admitted by the great majority of commentators and theologians of all parties.

Conybeare and Howson thus render Rom. 6:4:—
 “With him, therefore, we were buried by the baptism wherein we shared his death [when we sank beneath the waters], that even as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.” Then this comment is added in a foot-note:—
 —“This passage can not be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion.”

MacKnight in commenting on this passage says of Christ,—“He submitted to be baptized, that is to be buried under the water by John, and to be raised out of it again, as an emblem of his future burial and resurrection. In like manner the baptism of believers is emblematical of their own death, burial and resurrection.”

The Edinburg Reviewers say,—“We have rarely met a more fanciful piece of reasoning than that by which Mr. Ewing would persuade us that there is no allusion to the mode of immersion in the expression, ‘buried with him in baptism.’ This point ought to be frankly admitted, and indeed cannot be denied with any show of reason.”

F. W. Farrar on Rom. 6:3,4, says,—“The life of the Christian being hid with Christ in God, his death with Christ is a death to sin, his resurrection with Christ is a resurrection to life. The dipping under the water of baptism is his union with Christ’s death; his rising out of the waters of baptism is a resurrection with Christ, and the birth to a new life.”

Many pages could be filled with testimonies of similar import from men of the highest standing as scholars and theologians; but these must suffice.

Some contend that in these passages Paul refers to

baptism in the Holy Spirit, and not at all to baptism in water. If this was true, it would not help the cause of aspersion or affusion; for whether baptism in water or baptism in Spirit, it is still a burial, and only the act of immersion can represent a burial. But by far the great majority of commentators and critics of all the Christian centuries, including those who have practiced sprinkling and pouring, have understood and explained these passages as referring to baptism in water.

The entire scope of the apostle's argument sustains this position. In the seventeenth verse he thanks God that although they had been the servants of sin, yet they had become "obedient from the heart to that form of teaching," whereunto they had been delivered. Now the baptism in the Holy Spirit was a promise to be received, and not a command to be obeyed; but baptism in water was and is a command to be obeyed, and not a promise to be received. And as there is obedience in the baptism of which Paul wrote in the sixth of Romans, it follows that it is baptism in water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. In it there is a setting forth of death to sin, separation from a life of sin, and entrance into a new life. The subjects of this baptism, therefore, voluntarily placed themselves under the highest obligation to lead a life of righteousness.

2. *Baptism as a Washing.* "But according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing (or laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Tit. 3:5. R. V.) "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water, let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not." (Heb. 10:22,23. R. V.) "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the wash-

ing of water (Greek laver) with the word." (Eph. 5:25-26.)

That there is an allusion to baptism in all these passages, is generally admitted by commentators of all denominations; and if this is true, of which we have no doubt, the expressions used by the apostle are not appropriate to any act short of the immersion of the whole body in water. "That the washing of water by the Word here (Eph. 5:26.) is baptism, Watson, Wesley, Clark, MacKnight, Stuart and all other commentators, teach, as far as we have been able to examine."—Brents. Wesley and Whitby call the "washing of regeneration," Tit. 3:5, the "laver of regeneration;" and this is the marginal rendering of the revision. Clark says of the same,—"*undoubtedly the apostle here means baptism.*" A great host of great and good men testify to the same effect.

3. *Baptism not the Putting Away of the Filth of the Flesh.*

"Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God." (1 Pet. 3:21. R. V.)

Why was it necessary for the apostle to throw in this correction? It certainly implies that there were some who were beginning to regard baptism as a mere physical cleansing. But why would they look upon it in this way? Evidently from the act itself. If the apostolic baptism was immersion, as the word expressly signifies and as all the facts connected with it clearly imply, how easy for imperfectly instructed persons to fall into the error against which the apostle here warns his readers! But if the apostolic baptism consisted only in sprinkling a few drops or pouring a small quantity of water on the head of the subject, who could ever have imagined that it was a "putting away of the filth of the flesh," or in any sense a physical or bodily cleansing? This would have been an egregious

non sequitur. The very error then, or misconception, against which men were here warned, and into which some were liable to fall, shows that the baptism which was practiced by the apostles was an immersion of the whole body in the baptizing element.

IV. THE FIGURATIVE USE OF THE WORD, AND FIGURATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ORDINANCE ITSELF.

1. *The Sufferings of Jesus.*

“Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? “And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal ye shall be baptized:” etc. (Mark. 10: 38-39. R. V.) “But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” (Luke 12:50.)

Dr. George Campbell, a distinguished Presbyterian scholar translates the clause in question,—“Undergo an immersion like that which I undergo;” and says in a note,—“When the original expression is rendered in familiar language, there appears nothing harsh or extraordinary in the metaphor. Phrases like these, to be overwhelmed with grief, to be immersed in affliction, will be found common in most languages.”

Dr. Philip Doddridge, another learned and pious Presbyterian expositor, thus translates and paraphrases the passage,—“Are ye able to drink the bitter cup of which I am about to drink so deep, and to be baptized with the baptism and plunged into that sea of suffering with which I am shortly to be baptized, and as it were overwhelmed for a time? I have indeed a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with; and I know that I shall shortly be bathed as it were in blood, and plunged in the most overwhelming distress.”

Mr. Wesley's note on this passage is,—“Our Lord was filled with suffering within, and covered with them without.”

Bloomfield says,—“This metaphor of immersion in water, as expressive of being overwhelmed by afflictions, is frequent, both in the Scriptures and in ecclesiastical writers.”

The fact, then, that baptism involves a covering or overwhelming, is the foundation of this metaphorical use of the term. How it would belittle the sufferings of the Savior to represent them as the sprinkling of a few drops of water!

2. *The Baptism of the Israelites in the Cloud and in the Sea.*

“For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, how that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” (1 Cor. 10:1, 2. R. V.)

The reference here is doubtless to the design of baptism rather than to its action, as the passage of the Israelites through the sea and under the cloud brought them into a relation to Moses similar to that relation to Christ into which we are brought by baptism. Still, so far as the passage has any bearing at all on the action of baptism, it is in favor of immersion. The use of the term here is evidently figurative. Immersionists do not contend that the Israelites were literally dipped into or unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and surely the affusionists will not contend that the people themselves were literally sprinkled or poured into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, or anywhere else. The idea that a spray from the cloud besprinkled the people is utterly fanciful; for this was not a raincloud. It was a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. It was to be seen and followed by the Hebrews. When it moved forward they followed: but when

it stood still they stopped, pitched their tents, and remained till it moved again.

In what respect then did the passage of the people through the sea and under the cloud resemble a baptism? Evidently in the fact that they were covered or enveloped in the cloud and sea together. The sea stood up as a solid wall on each side, the cloud was between them and the Egyptians and also over them, for Paul expressly says that they were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; and thus they were all completely surrounded and covered by the cloud and the sea as persons are surrounded and covered by the water in which they are baptized or immersed. In this respect there is a striking resemblance between their passage through the sea and under the cloud, and the passage of a believing penitent through the waters of baptism when he goes down into it, is buried in it, and comes up out of it; but this resemblance is utterly destroyed by either sprinkling or pouring.

3. *The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8. See also Matt. 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 1:33.)

"Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Acts 1:5. See also Act 11:16.

The preposition which is here rendered *with* is *en* which literally means *in*, and should have been so rendered in these and all parallel passages. The English Revisers retain *with* in the text, and place *in* in the margin; but the American Revisers put *in* in the text, and place *with* in the margin.

Now we frankly admit that when this promise was fulfilled the Holy Spirit is represented as poured out, as shed forth, as falling on, etc.; but it was not the pouring out, the shedding forth, or the falling on of the Holy Spirit that constituted the baptism, but that which was done with the apostles and others. It was the Holy Spirit that

was poured out, that was shed forth, that "fell on all them who heard the word;" but it was the disciples at Jerusalem and they who heard the word at Cæsarea who were baptized. The pouring out, shedding forth, or falling on of the Holy Spirit was one thing; but the baptism of the apostles and others in the Holy Spirit was another and very different thing. If the pouring out, the shedding forth, or the falling on of the Holy Spirit was the baptism; then it was the Holy Spirit that was baptized, and not the apostles and others, but nothing can be more preposterous than this.

Now what was done with and to the assembled disciples at Jerusalem and the believing Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, that constituted their baptism in the Holy Spirit? It was evidently the overwhelming power or influence of the Holy Spirit that took complete possession of their faculties of heart and energies of life. As the Holy Spirit filled all the house in which the disciples were sitting on the day of Pentecost, and as they were all filled with the Holy Spirit we think we are justified in saying that their bodies and souls were both literally immersed in, and overwhelmed by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is a striking example of immersion as the consequence of a pouring out; but it was the immersion that constituted the baptism, and not the pouring out; for it was the persons who were immersed in, or overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, who were baptized, and not the Holy Spirit that was poured out. We cite a few testimonies from those who practiced affusion all their lives.

Gurtlerus:—"Baptism in the Holy Spirit is immersion into the pure waters of the Holy Spirit, or a rich and abundant communication of his gifts. For he on whom the Holy Spirit is poured out is, as it were, immersed into him."

LeClerc:—"He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.' As I plunge you in water, he shall plunge you, so to speak, in the Holy Spirit."

Archbishop Tillotson:—"It filled all the house.' This is that which our Savior calls baptizing with the Holy Ghost. So that they who sat in the house were, as it were immersed in the Holy Ghost, as they who were buried with water were overwhelmed and covered all over with water which is the proper action of baptism."

Casaubon:—"To baptize is to immerse—and in this sense the apostles are truly said to be baptized; for the house in which this was done was filled with the Holy Ghost, so that the apostles seemed to be plunged into it as into a fish pool."

Cyril, of Jerusalem, who lived in the fourth century, and who practiced immersion, says:—"As he who is plunged in water, and is baptized, is encompassed by the water on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit."

As to the figurative representations of the ordinance itself, we have already considered it as a *burial*, and as a *washing* under the head of Epistolary Allusions. It only remains to consider it briefly as a birth.

4. *Baptism as a birth.* "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5.)

That the Savior alludes to the ordinance of baptism in the phrase, "born of water," has been admitted by all parties in all ages since the apostles, and was never denied until recent times; and even now the great majority of scholars, critics, and commentators, understand it as referring to baptism. This being true, it constitutes a strong confirmatory argument in favor of immersion. Men and women can be born figuratively only out of that of which they come forth, except when the reference is to that which im-

parts life, as God, the Spirit, and the Word of Truth. But as the water does not and can not impart life, the only possible conceivable way in which a man can be born of water, even figuratively, is to come forth out of it; and this involves the necessity of putting him into it. In sprinkling and pouring there is not even the faintest resemblance of a birth.

In McClintock and Strong's Religious Encyclopedia we have this clear and positive testimony concerning the interpretation of John 3:5—"Hooker states that for the first fifteen centuries, no one had ever doubted its application to baptism." In this century, however, a few polemics have denied its application to baptism, some evade its bearing on the action of baptism, and others its bearing on the design of baptism; but what is their partisan decision worth in comparison with the consensus of Christendom for fifteen hundred years and the unbiassed judgment of such learned and candid expositors as Wesley, Barnes, Bloomfield, Whitby, Timothy Dwight, George Whitfield and others of like eminence.

In his notes on John 3:5, Mr. Wesley says:—"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit—except he experience the great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptized (whenever baptism can be had) as the outward signs and means of it."

Barnes in his notes on the same passage says:—"Born of water: By water here is evidently signified baptism; thus the word is used, Eph. 5:26; Titus 3:5.

Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, says:—"To be born again is precisely the same thing as to be born of the water and of the Spirit; and he who understands the nature and authority of this institution, and refuses to be baptized, will never enter the visible or invisible kingdom of God."

V. THE LITERAL USAGE OF THE TERM WHERE THE ORDINANCE IS NOT IN QUESTION.

There is not a single instance where the word is used literally in the New Testament in which it can be properly rendered either by sprinkle or pour; but in every instance it may be rendered by dip or immerse, although bathe or wash may in some instances be the better rendering. According to the testimony of the lexicons, however, it means to bathe or wash simply because these things are done by dipping or immersing; and hence this rendering itself is in favor of immersion.

I. "And when they come from the market, except they wash (baptisoontai) they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing (baptismous) of cups, and of pots, and of brazen vessels, and of tables," or beds. (Mark 7:4.)

Thomas Sheldon Greene, in the revised translation accompanying his revised Greek text, gives dip and dipping instead of wash and washing, and Meyer says that this expression is to be understood "of the immersing which the word always means in the classics and in the New Testament; that is here according to the context, the taking of a bath."

Vatabulus, Professor of Hebrew in Paris, says,—
"They washed themselves all over."

Grotius says,—
"They cleansed themselves more carefully from defilement contracted at the market; not only by washing their hands, but by immersing their bodies."

Some manuscripts have beds or couches instead of tables; and great wonder is sometimes expressed at the idea of dipping beds. But Maimonides, a learned Jewish Rabbi, says,—
"Wherever, in the law, washing of the flesh or clothes is mentioned, it means nothing else than dipping the whole body in a laver." Again he says,—
"A

bed that is wholly defiled, if he dip it, part by part, is pure."

Calmet says,—“The word bed is in many cases calculated to mislead the reader and perplex him. The beds in the East are very different from those used in this part of the world. They were often nothing more than a cloth or quilt folded double.”

The Revised Testament gives us bathe instead of wash with the following marginal note. “Greek, *baptize*. Some ancient authorities read *sprinkle themselves*.” This draws a clear distinction between baptizing and sprinkling in New Testament Greek.

2. “And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (ebaptisthee) before dinner.” (Luke 11:38.) Here the Revised Testament gives *bathed himself* instead of *washed*; and Greene, *dipped*.

3. “And he was clothed with a garment dipped (bebammenon) in blood.” Rev. 19:13. The Revision, following a different text, reads,—“And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled (peri-erramenon) with blood.” The marginal note is,—“Some ancient authorities read *dipped in* These authorities have *bebammenon*; and here again, we have a clear distinction between sprinkling and baptizing in the New Testament usage.

These examples must suffice under this head. Whenever *baptizo* is used in any of its forms, we have the idea of dipping literally in some element or else inclosing, surrounding, or overwhelming figuratively. Wherever we find sprinkle or pour in the English New Testament, we find some other word, and not *baptizo*, in the Greek. The testimony of Dr. George Campbell is in point here, as it has a bearing on the whole of this third argument.

“The primitive signification of *baptisma* is immersion; of *baptizein*, to immerse, plunge, overwhelm. The noun ought never to be rendered baptism, nor the verb to bap-

tize, but when employed in relation to a religious ceremony. The verb *baptizein* sometimes, and *baptein* which is synonymous, often occurs in the Septuagint and apocryphal writings, and is always rendered in the common version by one or the other of these words: to wash, to dip, to plunge."

In his note on Matt. 3:11, sustaining his rendering "in water" and "in the Holy Spirit," instead of "with water" and "with the Holy Spirit," he says,—“The word *baptizein* both in sacred authors and in classical signifies to dip, to plunge, to immerse, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dying cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitable to this meaning.” Then after showing that the words used for sprinkling in the Scriptures are never construed in this manner, he adds,—

“When therefore the Greek word *baptizo* is adopted, I may say rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs and sects which they prefer. The true partisan of whatever denomination inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit by that of the party.” These are noble words, and worthy to be written in letters of gold.

And now to sum up this argument:—If there was any fitness in the places selected for baptizing, any appropriateness in the prepositions used in connection with the term, any significance in the epistolary allusions to the ordinance, any propriety in the figurative use of the term and figurative representations of the ordinance itself, and any force in the literal use of the word where the ordinance is not in question,—then most assuredly *New Testament baptism was, and is, and ever will be*, IMMERSION.

FOURTH ARGUMENT.

This is based on the fact that immersion was the prevailing practice of the Church for thirteen hundred years. The testimony that establishes this fact is overwhelming; but only a few witnesses will here be cited as there is no testimony to the contrary.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF CHURCH HISTORIANS

MOSHEIM, in treating of the first century, says,—“The sacrament of baptism was administered in this century, without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for the purpose, and was performed by the immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font.”

Of the practice of the Church in the second century, he says,—“The sacrament of baptism was administered publicly twice every year, at the festivals of Easter and Pentecost or Whitsuntide, either by the bishops or the presbyters in consequence of his authorization or appointment. The persons that were to be baptized, after they had repeated the creed, confessed and renounced their sins, and particularly the devil and his pompous allurements, were immersed under water, and received into Christ’s kingdom by a solemn invocation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost according to the express command of our blessed Lord.”

NEANDER says,—“In respect to the form of baptism, it was in conformity with the original constitution and the original import of the symbol; performed by immersion as a sign of entire baptism into the Holy Spirit, of being entirely penetrated by the same. It was only with the sick, where the exigency required it, that any exception was made; and in this case baptism was administered by sprinkling.” Vol. I. page 310 in *Torrey’s Translation*.

In vol. iv, page 8, of the same *Translation*, he describes the baptism of seven thousand persons at Pyritz,

Pomerania, in the year 1124. "Seven days were spent by the bishop—Otto—in giving instructions, three days were appointed for spiritual and bodily preparation to receive the ordinance of baptism. They held a fast and bathed themselves, that they might with cleanliness and decency submit to the holy transaction. Large vessels filled with water were sunk in the ground and surrounded with curtains. Behind these baptism was administered in the form customary at that period, by immersion."

The reader will observe that this was near the close of the first quarter of the twelfth century. He will also notice that *baptisteries* were provided for the immersion of seven thousand persons.

RIDDLE, J. E.—"The supposition that the practice of immersion was abandoned as soon as infant baptism became prevalent, is founded on a mistake. Infant baptism had become general in the sixth century; but the practice of immersion continued until the thirteenth or fourteenth, and in fact has never been formally abandoned or entirely renounced." *Christian Antiquities*, page 461.

SCHAFF.—"The usual form of baptism was immersion. This is inferred from the original meaning of the Greek *baptizein* and *baptismos*; from the analogy of John's baptism in the Jordan; from the apostles' comparison of the sacred rite with the miraculous passage of the Red Sea, with the escape of the ark from the flood, with a cleansing and refreshing bath, and with burial and resurrection, finally, from the general custom of the ancient church which prevails in the East to this day." *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I. page 408.

STACKHOUSE.—"Several authors have shown that we read nowhere in scripture of any one's being baptized but by immersion, and from the acts of councils, and ancient rituals, have proved, that this manner of immersion continued (as much as possible) to be used for thirteen hun-

dred years after Christ." *History of the Bible*, Vol. I, page, 291.

GIESELER.—"Many new usages were connected with baptism itself toward the end of the second century." *Ecc. History*, Vol. I., page 264. "The condition of chatechumen usually continued several years; but the chatechumen often deferred even baptism as long as possible on account of the remission of sins by which it was to be accompanied. Hence it was necessary to baptize the sick; and for them the right of sprinkling was introduced." *Ib.*, page 248.

2. THE TESTIMONY OF THEOLOGIAN WHO WERE THEMSELVES AFFUSIONISTS.

DR. LINDSAY in *Enc. Britannica*. "The usual mode of performing the ceremony was by immersion. In the case of sick persons (*clinici*) the minister was allowed to baptize by pouring water upon the head or by sprinkling. In the early church 'clinical' baptism as it was called, was only permitted in cases of necessity, but the practice of baptizing by sprinkling gradually came in in spite of the opposition of councils and hostile decrees. The Council of Ravenna in 1311 was the first council of the Church which legalized baptism by sprinkling, by leaving it to the choice of the officiating minister. The custom was to immerse three times, once at the name of each of the persons of the trinity, but latterly the threefold immersion was abolished, because it was thought to go against the unity of the trinity."

GIBBONS.—"For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion." *Faith of our Fathers*, page 318.

STOKES.—"The construction of the ancient Churches, with their baptisteries surrounded with curtain, and the female assistants for the service of their own sex, amply

proves that in the ancient church, as to this day in the Eastern Church, baptism was ordinarily by immersion. The Church proved its Eastern origin by the mode wherein its initial sacrament was at first applied." *The Acts of Apostles*, page 142, 143.

DR. WHITBY.—"It being so expressly declared here, Rom. 6: 4, and Col. 2: 12, that we are buried with Christ in baptism, by being buried under water and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken hence; and this immersion being religiously observed by ALL CHRISTIANS FOR THIRTEEN CENTURIES, and approved by our Church, and the change of it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church, being that which the Romanists still urges to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity; it were to be wished, that this custom might be again of general use, and aspersion only permitted as of old, in case of the Clinici, or in present danger of death." Note on Rom. 6: 4.

III. THE CONTROVERSIES RESPECTING BAPTISM.

So far as the act of baptism is concerned, or its mode or form as it is usually expressed, these controversies, until quite recently, have always related to the validity of sprinkling or pouring. For eighteen centuries the validity of immersion was never challenged. This high misdemeanor was reserved to the latter half of the nineteenth century. And now it is only a few polemics who make this bold denial under the stress of controversy. Even the churches that refuse to practice immersion admit its validity when administered to a scriptural subject. Not only is the New Testament utterly silent with reference to sprinkling or pouring as the act of baptism, but it is also true that there is no mention of either as baptism before the middle of the third century, and then in connec-

tion with the sick only.

The first departure from the apostles, practice of which we have any account was the case of Novatian in the year 251 or 253. Eusebius quoting from an epistle of Cornelius concerning him, says,—“Being delivered by the exorcists, he fell in a severe sickness; and as he seemed about to die, he received baptism by affusion, on the bed where he lay; if indeed we can say that such a one did receive ‘it.’” Of his ordination to the presbyterate, it is said,—“‘This had been resisted by all the clergy and many of the laity; because it was unlawful that one who had been affused on his bed on account of sickness as he had been should enter into any clerical office; but the bishop requested that he might be permitted to ordain this one only.’”

Thus affusion began in the case of the sick, and sprinkling soon followed. The controversy that was raised by these innovations has continued to the present time, and must go on till the apostolic practice is fully restored. The testimony of Gieseler that the rite of sprinkling was introduced for the sick, has already been cited; and to this a few other testimonies will be added

BOWER.—“Baptism by immersion was, undoubtedly, the apostolic practice, and was never dispensed with by the church except in case of sickness.”

VOSSIUS.—“That the apostles immersed whom they baptized, there is no doubt, and that the ancient church followed their example is very clearly evinced by innumerable testimonies of the fathers.”

VAN OOSTERZEE.—“As concerns the administration of baptism, history teaches that it is as old and as universal as Christianity itself, but also that at a very early period it degenerated from its primitive simplicity.

Originally administered, in connection with immersion, by the Apostles and their fellow-laborers, we see Holy Baptism in the ancient Church already indicated by names

which testify of a higher degree of appreciation."

VENEMA.—"To the essential rite of baptism in the third century, pertained immersion, and not aspersion, except in cases of necessity, and it was accounted a half perfect baptism."

While affusion or aspersion was permitted in case of the sick, it did not come into general use until the thirteenth century."

J. J. OOSTERZEE, professor in the University of Utrecht.—"This sprinkling, which appears to have come first generally into use in the thirteenth century, in place of the entire immersion of the body, in imitation of the previous baptism of the sick, has certainly this imperfection, that the symbolical character of the act is expressed by it much less conspicuously than by complete immersion and burial in water."

Thus for a full thousand years or more, the question was, whether sprinkling and pouring were to be regarded as baptism at all, except in cases of the sick; and for a long time those who received affusion or aspersion in sickness, "were not called Christians but clinics" as Baronius, the great Catholic historian, expressly declares. And while from the thirteenth century on to the sixteenth and afterwards, aspersion generally prevailed, it was as a substitute for immersion by the authority of the Church, that is, of the Councils that claimed and exercised authority over the Church, as is clearly shown by the testimonies already cited.

[These last citations I have made from "Baptism, by A. Campbell," "Handbook of Baptism, by J. W. Shepherd," and "Immersion, by J. T. Christian."]

CONCLUSION. In view of all the facts presented, it is most confidently claimed that the immersion in water of a scriptural subject is the baptism that was ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission, that was ob-

served by the apostles without any change throughout their entire personal ministry, and that was generally practiced by the Church, except in the case of the sick, for thirteen hundred years. By a large and rapidly increasing class of believers, the command to baptize is regarded as a command to immerse. With the lights before them, this point they can never yield. From this apostolic ground they can never retreat.

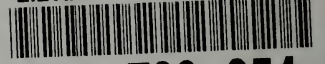
Waiving then, as I have written elsewhere, all argument based (1) on the classical meaning and use of the word baptizo, (2) on the New Testament usage of the same term, (3) on the words used in connection with this term, (4) on the places where baptism was administered, (5) on epistolary allusions to the ordinance, (6) on the controversies that arose over the introduction of pouring and sprinkling, (7) on the prevailing practice of the whole Christian world for thirteen hundred years, (8) on the practice of the Greek Church down to the present day, and (9) on the testimony of Church historians from the earliest to the latest, we do think, in view of the many candid concessions so freely made by the most learned and most pious of all parties, and in view of the occasional practice of almost all parties when immersion is demanded, that we may safely affirm that immersion as baptism is *catholic*, that it and it alone as baptism can lay any claim whatever to a divine origin, or to apostolic recognition and observance.

And in view of the same concessions, and the same occasional practice, it does seem to us that all who love the Lord and desire the triumph of His cause on earth, could unite on this as the one baptism without the sacrifice of any principle of truth or duty; and that for the sake of peace and harmony they ought thus to unite, and by uniting remove what is perhaps the greatest of all barriers in the way of that blessed unity for which Jesus so fervently prayed in the hour of trial—that blessed unity which for a time prevailed throughout the entire Church, and gave to it such an irresistible power.

1802-1803

1804-1805

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